

DEVOUT
REFLECTIONS
On
TIME,
And
ETERNITY:

With various Considerations and Counsells,
to assist our Victory over *this Present
World*, and help us to prepare for an
Everlasting State.

An *Introduction* is prefixt concerning the *First
Day of the Year*: how it was observ'd by the
Jews; and in what manner a Serious
Christian may employ it to the best
Advantage. Most of the following Medi-
tations are suited to that Purpose.

AMSTERDAM.
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In the Year. 1687.



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TO THE READER.

THe visible Decay of Piety, and Evangelical Holiness, is a common subject of Complaint: and hardly ever was it more justly so then now, with respect to the Generality of Churches, and particular Christians. All serious and considering Persons must needs reckon themselves obliged on that account both to *Mourn* and *Fear*. The causes of serious Mourning are too many, and too notorious, to be unobserved, by Those who have any Knowledge of the present State of the *Christian Religion* in Europe, even among the

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most Reformed. The general unacquaintedness with the Mysteries of the Gospel; the Reproach of the solemn Assemblies by the Corruption of its Doctrines and Worship, and the dishonour cast upon its most sacred institutions; the late terrible Desolations of the Temple and Sanctuary, and grievous sufferings of our Brethren in several parts of the World; the shameful Apostacy of so many Thousands from the doctrine and worship of the Gospel to Popish Idololatry; and other considerations of this kind, which might be nam'd, do carry with them a loud Call to Humiliation and mourning.

But the Practical Degeneracy
of

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of Professing Christians unto Worldliness, Profaness, and Sensuality, doth not only afford matter of Lamentation for the present but too much ground to Fear, that *the bitterness of Death is not past*; God's Anger is not turned away, or his Controversie ended with the Protestant Churches. And after we have known so many Thousands to renounce and abjure their Religion in an Hour of Temptation, and see so many more, yea the far greatest part, in a preparedness to Revolt, on the like or lesser Trials, by reason of their vicious Lives, and estrangedness from the Power of Religion, (because they receive

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not the Truth in the Love of it,) what can we reasonably expect, but farther Tokens of Divine Displeasure.

And how little of any encouraging prospect is there, by the serious Reformation of Persons, Families, and Churches to turn away his wrath? where are there any Symptoms of the Recovery of the Power of Godliness, from whence in our Age there is so undeniable a Declension? (and acknowledg'd by all Parties that there is so.) How little is to be seen of any such thing, among those who are most forward and zealous in espousing the Reformed interest? ev'n such as would be thought

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thought of all Others to be most concern'd for its Preservation, and have suffer'd not a little for it?

The distressed case of our Brethren (especially in *France*,) cannot but move our Bowells of Compassion, when we read or hear from time to time the Relation of the barbarous proceedings of their Persecutors. But the sensual wicked Lives of professedly Reformed Christians, is certainly a more dreadfull object to be considered; and ought so to be regarded by us, as the consequences of it are much more to be feared, then of the seircest *Persecution* by open and avowed Enimies. For the Curch of

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Christ never lost either *Truth* or *Holiness* that way : it hath rather been a considerable outward Means, for the preservation and encrease of Both. (Tho this cannot be said, but the direct Contrary, concerning Protestants persecuting one another for lesser differences.)

And what ever Expectations we may and ought to have, from the unfulfill'd *Prophecies*, of God's rebuilding Sion, in the latter days, & destroying her Enemies; (wich we have no reason to question but he will most gloriously effect, and ought dayly to pray that he would hasten it, for his Names sake :) yet can we never hope to see any thing considerable of that kind, in
our

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our Time , without a great *Repentance* , and *Reformation* , and the *more Plentifull Pouring out of the H. Spirit for the healing of the Nations*. I therefore wish that the confident Expectations of a speedy deliverance of the Church, may not divert us from the present Duty we are call'd to , as the proper appointed Means, to which God hath directed us for that end.

And are there any hopefull Beginnings of such a Thing, within view? is there any thing on foot to be observ'd , like such a Retrieving of *Gospel Holiness* in the Hearts and Lives of men? Doth not the Name and Thing grow more and more into Contempt every day? and

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who can tell how far it may proceed, to procure Judgment upon any particular Place or Country, that is guilty of so general, and provoking a Defection?

It concerns us therefore, every one to look to himself; to Repent, and do our first Works, and make our Peace with God, that we may be found within the smal number of those, who shall be thought worthy to escape the almost Epidemical infection, and *to stand before the Son of Man.* On which Account, any thing that is likely to awaken Men to the Consideration of the great acknowledg'd Principles of Religion cannot

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not be unseasonable. Yea in such a case the meanest, and weakest Endeavors may be of some use. The subjects of the following Reflexions are most of them of that kind, necessary to be attended to by all sorts, of Persons; and so cannot be too often prest, tho in different Manners.

The usefullness of the subject Matter, and the smallness of the Bulk, are two things which are wont to recommend a Book to most Readers. For which reason, I may Hope, this will be read by several, who suffer much better, because bigger, books to ly by them.

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them neglected. Some may possibly give it the reading, as *a New-years Gift*. And who even shall be so far persuaded by it, as to set a part some Time in the beginning of the Year, for Self-examination, Confession of Sin, Repentance, Thanksgiving, and solemn renewall of his Covenant with God, (which several of these Reflexions may not only excite to, but are intended to direct and assist him in,) I am persuaded he will thank me for putting him in mind at least, of so seasonable an Exercise. The greatest part of these Meditations were begun on a *New-years Day*, tho some others are thought fit.

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fit to be inserted, as tendign to promote the same design. But knowing how much easier it is, to stirr up other mens Devotion, then to command and keep alive my own; 'tis desir'd that some of the most devout Thoughts contained in these papers may be lookt upon as what the Author aims at, and would persuade to rather then what he hath allready attain'd : as what he knows he ought to be and do, and doth seriously endeavor, rather then what he is, and hath been : heartily lamenting wherin he hath been faulty or defective in such Duties, as these and the like Reflexions do oblige to, and enforce upon All who shall read them, and therefore

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To the Reader.

much more upon him self.

That they were penn'd at several times, and in occasional retirements for Spiritual Exercises, will with the difference of the subject be a sufficient excuse that some are larger, and others shorter, and that the stile is in some places more neglected than in others. If I may hereby render any service to then Souls of men, if any secure Sinner, any self deceiving Hypocrite, or backsliding Christian be hereby awaken'd, or any serious Believer's Devotion be quicken'd and advanc'd, I hope God will accept it. To his Blessing I humbly recommend it, for those Ends.

THE

T H E

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D E.

T H E INTRODUCTION.

From what Time the Jews reckoned the Beginning of their Year: of the difference between their sacred & civil account. The Feast of Trumpets on the first day of the year, its Institution, nature, & design: the Traditions & Customs of the Jews respecting that Day.

UPon the deliverance of the Jews out of *Agypt*, the first moneth which began with the new Moon next to the vernal Equinox, was to be accounted *the Beginning of Moneths*, *Exod. 12: 2.* it answers to the latter end of our *March*, & the Beginning of *April*; & is sometimes called *Nisan*, & sometimes *Abib*. It was
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ever after that Deliverance, reckon the First moneth of the year, in their *Sacred* or Ecclesiastical *Account*. Therefore the *Passover* kept in this moneth, is said to be observed in the *first* moneth: & the Feast of *Purim*, which was kept in our *February*, is said to be in the *last* moneth, that is, of the Sacred year. A Period so remarkable & extraordinary, as that was to the Jews, deserved very well to be particularly remembered & taken notice of: & might justly be accounted the *First*, or chiefest of *their moneths*. And by comparing *Exod.* 12. 41. with *Gal.* 3. 17. it may be concluded that *Abraham* received the *Promise*, on the fifteenth day of this moneth: & 't is computed that about the same time of the year *Isaac* was born; & the *Tabernacle* afterward erected in the wilderness.

As

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As that *Redemption of Israel* from their Bondage in *Ægypt*, was but a type of a more glorious *one* by the *Messiah*, (which all the World are concerned in as well the Jews) he was pleased to suffer Death in this moneth. 18. *John*. 28. According to this computation, the moneth *Tisri*, which began with the first new moon next to the Autumnal Equinox, is in several places of H. Scripture called the *Seventh moneth*. Tho as to *Civil & Political Affairs*, this was the *First moneth* of the year: & so accounted both before & after their coming out of *Ægypt*. For this reason, *the Feast of Tabernacles*, (or the Feast of Harvests, on the 15. day of this moneth, when the Fruits of the Earth were gathered in,) is said to be in the end of the year. *Exod*. 23. 16. This moneth *Tisri* answers to part of our *Sep-*

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tember, & part of *October*. About this Time of the year is most commonly reckon'd, the Creation of the world; the Birth & Baptism of *J. Christ*, the Head of the second Creation; the consecration of Solomon's Temple, & other remarkable Events: from hence they computed their years of *Jubilee*; & the seventh year for their Land to rest, &c. There were as many Feasts & religious Solemnities Apointed to the Jews in this moneth, as in all the year besides. The *Eighty first Psalm*, composed by *Asaph*, for the first day of this moneth, or the Feast of Trumpets, is supposed to have been in remembrance of that Deliverance of Israel out of *Ægypt*: the sounding of Trumpets being a token of liberty.

Hammond.
in loc.

This *Feast of Trumpets*; on the first day of the new-year ac-
cor-

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According to their Civil Account is thus commanded, *Levit. 23. 24. Numb. 29. 1. & 10. cap. 10.* that it should be, *a Sabbath, and a Memorial of blowing of Trumpets, an holy Convocation, &c.* Some think it is called a *Memorial of Trumpets* to preserve the memory of *Isaac's Deliverance*, by the substitution of a Ram to be sacrificed in his stead; to this purpose it may be alledged that it is sometimes called by the Jews, the *Binding of Isaac*: which they suppose to have been in the same day of the year. By others termed *Festum Cornu*, the Feast of the Horn. But it is more probable, that this name was not given, with any respect to *Isaac*, but on the account of that *kind of Trumpets*, which where then sounded, viz, such as were made of sheeps or *rams horns*. Others think it to have been Apointed as a gratefull

Godcan niver. Hist. de l'Eglise. Tom. 1. c. 1. §. 6.

Hospinian. de Fest. Judaic.

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remembrance of former victories which God had afforded them. But the most likely account of it is this: that it was intended to solemnize the Beginning of the new-year, to mind them of the Beginning of the World, & to excite their thankfulness for the fruits, & blessings, & Benefits of the year preceding. The extraordinary Blowing of Trumpets by the Priests at this time, (in all their Cities, as well as at Jerusalem, where two silver Trumpets were also used at the Temple; as well as these of Horn, & the Levites sung the 81. Ps.) might serve both to stir up the People to bless God for the favors of the year past, acknowledging his Goodness in preserving them to the beginning of another; & withal excite them to pray for his Protection & Blessing, for the new year on which they now entred.

*Lightfoot.
Temple
Service.
chap. 16.*

Mai-

INTRODUCTION. 7

Maimonides, the famous Jewish Rabbim, thinks the sounding of Trumpets at this time was designed to signifie some such Exhortation as this, *Arise O ye sleepers, out of your sleep, and you that slumber awake out of your slumbering. Search your works, and turn by Repentance. Remember your Creator, you that have forgotten the Truth, and have exchanged it for the vanities of the world; and have all your lives wandred after vanity, which will not profit or deliver you. Consider your souls; consider your ways, and works, and let every one of you forsake his evil way, and his thoughts that are not good.*

Canones de Penitent. cap. 3. can. 6.

Some have imagined a typical Representation of the *two Covenants* in this Feast. The old Covenant figured by the year passed; and the Covenant of Grace, or the Gospell state by the new year

A 3 then

then began, and that by the sound of Trumpets was prefigured the future preaching of the Gospel, according to that of the Apostle, *Their sound went forth unto all the Earth, and their words unto the end of the world*; and so the Feast of Trumpets is abrogated by the preaching of the Gospel, if that were typically signified by it. Without supposing any Type here, in a strict and proper sense; we may yet farther consider the Parallel, and observe, how the Joy and Gratitude that the Trumpets did excite, is exceeded by that greater rejoicing, promised and foretold by the Prophets, when the Glad tidings of the Gospel of Salvation by the *Messiah* should be published to the world. 54 *Is.* 1. 2 *Luk.* 11. 4 *Gal.* 27. which hath been in part accomplished: and will be more compleat, in that Kingdom

INTRODUCTION. 9

dom of Peace and Purity, which Christ will establish upon earth, towards the end of the World: and shall be finally perfected at the end of Time: when Days and Years, and Time thus measured, shall be no more. But the Messiah, our B. Saviour, having finished his mediatory undertaking as to what concerns *Earth*, shall come againe from *Heaven*, with *the Trump of God*, to raise the Dead, and summon all the world to their final Judgement. Then shall he deliver up the Kingdom to his Father: and the Faithfull enter into *the Joy of their Lord*, and be for ever with him.

There is a Tradition among the Jews mentioned by *Maimonides*, that on the first day of the new year, God enters into Judgement for the sins of the year and Life past. That every ones Faults are weighed against his good
A 5. works.

*Canones de
 Penit. cap.
 3. can. 5.*

TO INTRODUCTION.

works. He that is found *Right-
ous* is sealed unto Life: and he that
is found *wicked* is sealed unto
Death.

And 't is a general custom that
hath obtained among the Jews,
for the ten first days of the new-
year, to rise out of their Beds in
the night, and to continue in
their Synagogues praying and
worshipping, untill break of day.
The superstitious and ridiculous
Ceremonies of the * *modern
Jews* on this Day, I shall not re-
peat. However vaine and ground-
less, superstitious, and absurd
many of their Customs, and
Practises are on this day: yet
this blind Devotion of the *Jews*
may justly shame and condemn
the Christians of our Age: who
commonly spend the Beginnings
of every year worse then any o-
ther parts of them; and instead
of

*Vid. Cere-
monies &
Cout. par-
miles Iniss
Panjour-
dhuy part.
3. c. 5.*

of any solemn Retirements for Prayer and Meditation, which might assist them to number their Days, and prepare for Eternity; instead, I say, of such seasonable Exercizes, how do vaine and hurtfull Sports and Pastimes, or trifling and unedifying mirth, and fruitless conversations consume the greatest part of the Days, (and nights too) of the Beginning of the year! And thus, when the first fruits of the year are offered up to sin and vanity, 't is no wonder if the following parts of it are imployed to no better purpose: without any due concern for the Soul, and an Everlasting State.

To Endeavor some Remedy to those disorders, and give some assistance to them who desire seriously to make Religion their Principal Business, is the end of publishing these Reflexions. I most

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heartily beseech the God of a-
 Grace to influence by his H. Spil-
 rit, the Conscience of every Rea-
 der, that some such effect may be
 attained. Haveing found the
 Practise recommended, to be of
 use to my self; and my own Heart
 warmed in composing the sub-
 stance of thes Papers, (tho with-
 out any Intention at that Time of
 exposing them to the world,) 'tis
 not unreasonable to hope, that
 what hath been beneficial to one,
 may be helpfull to another. It
 cannot certainly be unadvisable
 or improper to Begin the year
 with God, with whom we should
 begin every Day. 'Tis decorous
 and becoming, to Dedicate our
 selves to Him, in a more solemn
 manner then ordinary, at such a
 Time: Thankfully to acknow-
 ledg *the Favors* and *Blessings* we
 have particularly received the
 Year Past: and to recollect the
Sins

INTRODUCTION. 13

Sins we have been guilty of; to aggravate them with Humility, Contrition, and deep Remorse: to renew our *Covenant* with God: to repeat and fortifie our *Resolutions* of living better: imploring his Grace to assist us in it: to reflect seriously on the mutability, frailty, brevity of our *present Life*: to consider the swiftness, uncertainty, irrecoverableness, and consequent value of our *Time*: to look forward to a Blessed, or miserable *Eternity*, one of which we must share in; and to confirm our Faith in the *Certainty* thereof, and consider our near approach to such an unchangeable State: to think what improvement we should make of the *Death* of others, especially of Relations: and Friends, who have lately been called home: To make the *Supposition* in good earnest, that we may follow them *this year*, and

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dye before another new years day; to imprint such a Thought on our Hearts, and the inferences that may naturally be deduced from it: to beg of God, to inable us to Redeem our Time, and discharge the Duty of our particular places; and prepare us for all the Events of the following year; and so effectually *Teach us to number our days; that we may apply our Hearts unto true Wisdom*: least we be surprized by an unexpected Death before the period of another year. And *lastly* to pray for our Relations, and Friends, Families and Neighbors, and our Enemies too; and plead with God on the behalf of Sion, and the afflicted State of the Reformed Churches. To some of thes and the like Purposes, I hope what is here offered, may be subservient: if considered with seriousness and application, after

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after humble Invocation of the Blessing of God, and the aids of his Spirit; composeing our minds and thoughts as in his most awe-full and holy Presence.

I have only this farther to request: that if any one soul shall find any real Benefit in this kind; he would so far requite my charitable assistance of him, that when his heart is most serious, his Spirit most composed and devout, and his affections most vigorous and lively, he would not forget, to put up one Prayer to Heaven for me, for Greater Holiness and Abilities to Honour God, and persevering Faithfullness to his Truth and Interest, what ever Temptations to desert it may be imploied by the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*: the three Great Enemies of thine and my Salvation.

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DEVOUT REFLEXIONS

On

T I M E,

And

E T E R N I T Y,

This World, and the
Next.

I.

*Of the changeable State, and short
Duration of Earthly Things:
especially of Man, how little it
is considered and believed: how
necessary it should be so.*



When I consider that
yesterday was the
Conclusion of the
last year; and that
I now am entred on
ano-

On Time and Eternity. 17

another ; 'tis leasonable to reflect on the mutable condition, and short Duration of all Things in this world, which are measured by Time. That as they have their *Beginning*, so they have their *End*: and that the distance, or space of Time between the one & the other is very little. Let me not then, o my soul! Rejoyce & please my self to much in New Injoyments; remembring a Change may be at hand, & the End is certaine.

Many who were Rich, and Flourishing the last year may be reduc'd to Poverty and deep distress, before the end of this: who are now in a capacity to relieve others, within a few moneths, or a shorter space, may be objects of other mens Charity. The thing which hath been, is that which may be: and that which hath been seen in one year, may happen in another: so easily so quickly
ly

1 Cor. 7.
v. 29.

ly may a Change be made! Riches may unexpectedly change their Owners, and borrow wings of a thousand Accidents, wherewith to flye to Heaven for a new Disposall. *They therefore who possess should be as if they possessed not: for the Fashion of this world passeth away.* Innumerable casualties may effect that change, which no humane Art or skill can possibly foresee or hinder. afflictive unexpected Evills attend us everywhere, we cannot promise ourselves Tranquillity for a Day, much less an Year to come. they lay in wait for us on every side, enter at every crevice, and commonly overtake us, when we are least apprehensive of their approach. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of Trouble: He cometh up as a flower, and is cut down: fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not.*

Job. 9: 25.

not. What then are Riches, Beauty, Strength, and Honor, the accidents of this *Substance*, which is it self but a *Shadow*! His *Life* is but a *vapor*, on which they all depend; then how much less are they? to how speedy an alteration are they subject! what numberless Instances of this doth one years experience furnish! what sadning Disappointments and unexpected Calamities have befallen many since this Day Twelve moneth! and multitudes who are now at ease, and think their mountaine too strong to be removed, shall meet with sharper Trials before the end of this year. Alas! how few consider or believe it, till they find it so? All men should count upon trouble and Disappointment, suffering and sorrow in this world: and he that hath the least share is reckon'd the most Prosperous man:
and

and yet he knows not how soon his Portion may be doubled. We reckon our Joys by the absence of some degrees of sorrow and Calamity, that others meet with: and before the end of this year, our condition may be as disconsolate as theirs. O my soul! tho I know this to be true; tho I cannot, I dare not deny it; yet how difficult is it to conquer the Love of this world, and of this Body, to that degree I ought! to undervalue the intrest of a short, a mutable, uncertaine, and troublesome Life, in comparison of the permanent possession of an Everlasting Good! tho I know that what is earthly and temporal must needs be thus changeable and fading: and that it is as true of *Man* himself as of any thing under the sun; yet how do I forget what Man is! how do I live, as if all this were as certain-
ly

ly fals, as it is unquestionably true? admire, love, fear, trust in Man, as if he were the direct-contrary to what he is, and seek for immortality upon earth, & act as if I were assured of it, & were not liable to any change: tho I acknowledg'd and know the contrary. Tho the last years experience, and the observation of every day doth convince me of it; tho all history and all the records of the Grave attest it; tho all mankind in every Age have found it so; tho it be a manifest notorious truth, legible in the various changes and calamities, but especially in the Dust and ashes of all who have lived before us, (our Graves being often made of our Predecessors Dust, and the Earth we bury in having once been living) yet how little is it believed, how seldom considered. The Con-
fir-

firmation of it which one year gives us hath little Influence on our Hearts of lives, with respect to the next. We ought therefore to accustom our selves to these thoughts, before such changes Happen, to which our *Final change* I shall ere long succeed. They will be less efficacious, if never admitted till our minds are oppress'd and feebl'd by the weight of Affliction. We shall then want that vigor of Reason which should cooperate with the remedy: and which if used before hand would help to support and stay our minds under all subsequent revolutions. For those Considerations may be able to fix and stay our minds under changes, that may not be sufficient to recover and raise our spirits after they are dejected and fallen.

Of

I I.

Of the change in mens Inclinations, Opinions, and Actions which one year shows. How observable it is in Others: how much more discernible in our selves. Honor and Reputation &c. how uncertainly preserved, and how easily blasted.

WHat a discovery doth one year make of the mutability of Man, not only of his outward Condition, but of the Man himself, his temper, his Practise, his Inclinations, his Aversions, &c. He abideth not at one stay: every breath of wind turns him to another shape. We despise to day, that which we admired yesterday: and to morrow hate the object of our present Love. We begin friendships, and cancell them
on

24 *Devout Reflexions*

on slight occasions: and a mortal enmity often succeeds to a tender affection; the very Persons, who are in one year our darling Friends, and possibly deserved to be so, may yet be open Enemies the next, and seek our Ruine. *Lord! what is man?* How deceitfull and mutable the Heart of man! we know not what other men are, or will prove to be, till a trial; and we are equally Ignorant concerning our selves, till an hour of temptation. How patiently do we think we could bear Afflictions till we feel them! how Partial and mistaken a Judgment do we make of our wisdom and strength in reference to the future! we counsel others to submission and resignation in the most difficult trials, and wonder they complaine so loud; when we our selves despond and sink under half their Burden: and
send

send up our more impatient murmurs to Heaven, when God thinks fit to prove us by a lighter Stroke. We censure and condemn others, who are in an higher Station, and are called to more difficult work than we; when by a little Advancement, and the like Temptations, we discover that we are as bad as they. They who were reputed Humble Temperate and Religious, when they have been exalted higher, become Proud, sensual, and ungodly. Had some been told a twelve moneth since, what now they are, and speak, and act, they would have made *Hazael's* answer, *Am I a Dog, that I should do this?* A change in the publick affaires of the State, and by that means of particular Interests, or some alteration of our own more private Circumstances (calling us to new Duties and ex-

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posing us to new Temptations) discovers us more to our selves, and to other men, then was expected, and proves us to be very different from what we appeared to be. Such a change, for Instance, as from Poverty to Riches, from Sicknes to Health, from obscurity to Honor, from Privacy to a Publick charge &c. or on the contrary. May we not fear, that some, who a year since dared not live a day in the neglect of Closet and family Devotion, do now omit it, for many Days and weeks together? And that some, who once were careful to improve the whole Sabbath to religious purposes, now place the whole of their Religion in attending the publick worship, and think it enough, not for that Day only, but for the whole week. Under the afflicting hand of God, or some apprehensions of an
pro-

proaching change, or sens of Guilt upon Great Transgressions, the convictions of sin are lively, Conscience is sensible and awake, affections warm, Resolutions strong, &c. but alas! how soon doth the case alter! our Spirits cool, our zeal abates, our good Purposes untwist and dye, and come to nothing. By degrees we return to Folly, and boldly venture on that sin, we lately trembled at. Thro the want of continued smart afflictions, or of a serious awakening Ministry, and friendly faithfull admonition: or thro the Temptations of vaine Company, and the remaining power of fleshly Lusts. So that we falsifie our most sacred Promises and Resolutions, violate our holy vows, cancell the bonds of God upon us, suffer the Devil to reenter and prevail again, to take possession of our hearts, and

yeild our selves an easy prey to his Temptations, till our latter end beworse then our Beginning. Oh what a change doth one year let us see! in Persons as well as things! in our selves as well as other Men! And as it is with Man himself, so with every thing that he values himself upon, or for which he is esteemed by others: and even this esteem and Reputation is also changeable and uncertaine. Not to Instance in Riches, but in what is nobler, *Learning*, and the Improvements of the mind by study; how soon may the violence of a Disease disturb or stupifie the Braine to that degree, as shall reduce the greatest scholar to the Pittied condition of a Fool, or Bedlam? and where is his Reputation and Renown, in such a case? But much less then that, will blast the fairest Reputation, with the far greatest part of the world:

it

it may be lost by unwary mistakes, by fals reports, by envy and malice, by the subtle hatred of Enemies, or by the weakness and credulity of Friends, (who will listen to every Backbiters story) or by one or two indiscretions of the man himself; and no man can be certaine to secure his Reputation, while he lives: much less after he is dead. People will talk of us as they please: and their opinions very often change from one extreme to the other. But he who hath the loudest Fame shall only be talkt of a little longer then his Neighbors: and that by a few dying Men, that must themselves be ere long forgotten. And how small a part of the Inhabited world, is acquainted so much as with the name of the greatest men in Europe? and how different and Contrary are mens Opinions and Discourses of them,

where they are known, and talkt of. And how many holy excellent persons are buried in oblivion, or mis-represented as unworthy to live on earth, whose names will be found in the book of Life. Our Life is yet as mutable and uncertaine as any of thes. Our Breath is in our nostrils, and tho there be room enough for it to goe out, we have no assurance that we shall have power to draw it in againe.

III.

Of the uncertainty of Living to the Period of another Year. The vanity of this Life: the swiftness of Time, and how to be improved.

I Now begin another year: but what Assurance have I to outlive it? I cannot say how soon
my

On Time and Eternity. 31

my Sovereign Judge may call me hence, and summon me to appear before his Righteous Bar. Oh let me not defer my necessary preparations for Death, which may be nearer then I imagine! let me mind the Great things first, which are of absolute necessity, to be done, sometime or other before I dye! This perishing Body which I have pamperd and indulged, at the expence of so much cost and Time, may be putrifying in a silent Grave, before half this year be past. Lord! bless this thought, to awaken my diligent endeavours to secure the Blessedness of *Eternity*! to mortifie the desire of Great things for my self, in future years; by the considered possibility of dying before the end of this! For no glass is more brittle, no Bubble more vanishing, no Ice more dissolving, no Flower more fading,

B 4 ding,

ding, no shadow less substantial, no sleep or dream more deceiving, no sound more Transient, nothing more vaine, and more uncertaine then *Life*, on which all other things in this world depend. We sleep every night in the outer chambers of Death: and in some diseases, *sleeps*, which is the image and picture of death is taken away, to give place to the Original, and make way for death. And every year, every week, every day are hastening to our final change: which may overtake us ere we are aware. Every word we speak, is formed of that Breath whereby we live; and we may not live to pronounce another sentence: but the lamp of life be extinguisht and blown out by a sudden blast. Every thing we do carries away some sands of our little Glass of Time; and how little may remaine? Or how soon
may

may the Glafs be broke? our
souls are in our bodies, as a little
air inclosed in a thin bubble:
how easily is that broken, and
where are we? How many who
are now a live, in health and vigor,
who deliberate on their meat and
drink, and are curious of air
and exercize, to maintaine them-
selvs in health, and pleas them-
selvs with the dream of years to
come, shall never see another
New-years day? it may be not
another moneth, or week, or
morrow? When I lye down to
sleep, I hope to rise stronger, and
fresher, and fitter for work, but I
know with all, I may rise no more.
And may not my name be on the
Roll of those who shall next be
called, at least some time this
year? Let me not then neglect or
foolishly delay my Principal Bu-
siness; to provide against a chan-
ge, which is inevitable, but the

time of it altogether doubtfull. Ought not my first and chiefeſt care be employed to make my Peace with *God*. (He alone can be my Happineſs : to his final Judgment I am haſtening : His Favor alone can give me ſupport and Joy in a dying hour : To his mercy I muſt truſt, when I leave this world, and can have no advantage more by any thing in it :) that he may mercifully receive my ſoul at Death and be my everlaſting Portion. Do I know my Life is thus vaine and tranſient? and ſhall I not ſeriously improve it to ſuch a Purpose? Shall theſe thoughts leave no Impreſſion upon me? Do I breath continually in this Element of vanity? and yet forget where I am? and remaine inſenſible of ſo near a change? Shall theſe thoughts paſs away as a vaniſhing Cloud, and diſtill no ſoftening drops on
my

my soul? Shall the Image of Death, which meets me every where, be only like an appearing Ghost or Phantasm, that startles and scares a little, but is presently gone, and no more considered? Oh! let me now remember to make God my friend, and secure an intrest in his Eternal mercy, while the Day lasts; yea while my Reason and understanding are free, and not disturbed and clouded by Fear and paine, and the disorders of the Body, as commonly they are in sickness, if God should vouchsafe me that warning which yet I may not promise my self to have, for I may be cut off by a sudden stroke, before the end of *this year*, I now begin.

IV.

Of the seeming Difference, between so many Years Past, and the same number of Years to come.

WHen I look back on the preceding years of my Life, how easily can I grasp them all at once? they are even as *Yesterday when 'tis past*. But so many years to come hath something great and vast, which fills my thoughts, and affects my mind, after another manner. Such is the difference between *past Injoyments*, and the *Expectation of future*. Let me suppose the same term and duration of Years, and yet how different are my Apprehensions of what is past, and of what is yet to come! Things past by a remembrance of some re-
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On Time and Eternity. 37

markable passages when they happened, seem to be present with me: but not knowing what may happen in the same number of years to come, I have nothing wheron to fix my thoughts. Or the reason of this difference may rather be, that men in this degenerate and necessitous State, (with unsatisfied desires reaching after Happiness, and sensible nothing present can afford it, and knowing by Experience that nothing past could have done it,) are eagerly desirous of Felicity, and because we know not but what is to come may procure it, we hope it will; which makes the Time seem long by reason of our Expectation and desire of *Good*. Whereas the foresight of *Evill*, and the Expectation of *that*, some years hence, makes the Time rather seem short and near at hand: So many years to come;

in the Expectation and desire of Good, are long and tedious, such *Hope deferred makes the Heart sick*: even tho'tis of that, sort as mult needs fail our Expectations. Prepare me, Lord! for what thine unerring Counsell shall pleas to order, as to the remainder of my time on earth: and suffer me not to count upon a great number of *Years* to come, since *this* for ought I know may be my last; neither let me expect Rest and Happiness in this world, which nothing Temporal can afford. This is not the state or season, wherein, by any promise of God, I am encouraged to hope it. And if *fifty or threescore years* to come, be thought so great a matter, and really is so, as to our stay on earth; Oh what apprehensions ought I to admit concerning an endless, *Everlasting State*! especially being as certain
taine

taine of the *latter*, after death, as I am uncertaine about the *former*; wither so many years be yet to come before my death?

V.

The little Portion of our Time on Earth considered, by a Computation of the Life of man, from the number of Years and Hours.

THink o my soul ! how short is that Life at longest, made up of years and moneths and days: such little parts, and yet in number few. Well therefore may it be exprest as I find in holy writt by *years of number*. That is, such as may soon be numbred. When a *few years* are come, saith *Job*, ^{16. c. 22.} ^{12. Ezck.} ^{16.} (or the years of number, as in ¹⁰ *Isai. 19.* the original,) I shall go the way, whence I shall not return. By the years of on *Hireling*, which were

were not above *three*. 16. *If*. 14.
We usually compute *Threescore*
and ten years, to the Life of man:
let me suppose *four score*. The
Bed with most imployes one half:
and hardly *one in Thirty* doth
reach the Age of *Seventy Years*.
And they who live to such an
Age, do yet complaine how soon
'tis done. Ignorant child hood,
and Heedless Youth, and Infirm
old Age may be supposed to take
up be a third part of that Time. In
either of them very little of the
great Ends of Life are answered.
We ordinarily begin to reck-
on our lives from our Birth:
wheras for a good while after we
know not wither we are alive or
no, but are beholding to others
to make the account for us.
When we first come to the steady
use of Reason, or what we call
the years of Discretion; how
few are there but from the preju-
dices

Winter
Evening
Conference.
Genf. 1.

dices of Education, from the corruption of Humane Nature, from the want of Experience, from the Infection of bad Company, how few, I say, but spend their younger years in those things, which afterwards they are ashamed of, when Experience hath taught them the Wisdom of men. How great a part of our remaining Time is taken up in the necessites of Nature about food and Rayment, and in lawfull cares, to support the Body? and how much more then needs, in pampering dressing and adorning it? out of the smal remainder, how much is imploied in the concerns of a Family, and near Relations, in particular Callings, in necessary Civil Business, and in getting, keeping, or improving an Estate? Besides all the Time that is spent in Recreations, visits, unprofitable discours, imper-

pertinent thoughts, journeys, sickness, and innumerable other occasions, some allowable and many needless? After this, how little Time remains wherein to Cultivate and improve our minds, by Languages, Arts and Sciences, or the knowledg of a Trade, &c. How little then after all, may we say, is left for the the matters of Religion! for Devotion to God, and serious preparation for another world! Alas! how smal a number of years make up the Life of Man! and how smal a Portion of that, is imployed about the Principal Business, for which we were born, & for which we live? We divide Time into Past, Present, and Future: but the *Past* is not now ours; the *Future* is not yet, and the *Present now* is past, ere the sound be pronounced. And yet this is all the Time allotted us, wherein

wherein to secure the Blessedness of Eternity. How many Hours more of our little Time might be improved then commonly are by the Best? In every year there are eight thousand seven hundred seventy five Hours: if we allow the greatest half for sleep, and necessary attendance on the Body, and take but *four thousand Hours* for our work and business of consequence: how poor an account can most men give of all these four thousand Hours, in every year? not one hour in *seven*, not one in *ten*, is ordinarily devoted to God, and the purposes of Religion. Should it not affect us, seriously to consider this? especially if we remember, at what an uncertainty we are, how small a number of Days and Hours do yet remaine. This year, this moneth, this week, this day, or hour may be my last. What an

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unsuspected accident or a sudden disease may doe, I know not: but this I know that there is scarce any thing that hath not killed some Body; an hair, a feather, a vapor, a breath hath done it, and when the Apostle James asks the question, *What is your Life?* he answers, *It is even a vapor, that appeareth a little while, and then vanisheth away.*

VI.

Of the Redemption of Time, how precious and valuable a Treasure it is, and will be thought to be, when 'tis too late.

IS the Life of men so short and fleeting, our days on Earth so few, and so uncertaine, how careful should I be to manage every hour? indeavoring to match the swiftness of Time by
my

On Time and Eternity. 45

my celerity and diligence to improve it ! As there is no Covenant to be made with Death ; so no Agreement for the arrest and stay of Time ; it keeps its pace wither I redeem and use it well or noe. The greatest part of our life is designedly imploied to avoid death, we eat and drink and sleep and labor and rest, that we may not dye ; and yet even by thes we hasten to death. Every Breath, every puls, every word leaus one less of the number which God hath apointed me, and carries away some sands of the glass of Time ; and yet how little care is taken to imploy it well. We seldom value it, till we can no longer use it to any advantage : and tho we know it can neither be retarded in its motion, or recalled when past, yet of nothing are we more Prodigal. Yea how many complaine of it as a Burden ; and
know

know not what to do with their Time, are exceedingly at a losse wherein to imploy it; what to doe to be rid of it. But alas! how near is that change, when they shall think nothing too dear to purchase some few grains of that sand, which now seem too many, while they are passing thro their Hourglasse? Did we consider it as we ought, we should not foolishly throw away so much of it in trifles, and things Impertinent, or what is worse? How much more might we redeem then commonly we doe! to how much better purpose might we husband it! how much more work might we doe, were we never Idle, or did not loyter! we might walk far, did we not often stand still, or goe out of our way. We see it plainly by the great and excellent effects of some few mens Industry in every Age. Art hath
found

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found means to set spies and watches as it were on the Sun; that He cannot look out, but they take hold of his shadow, and force it to tell how far he is gone that day: and yet while we are curious in making time give a just account of it self to us; how little do we consider the account of our Time which we must shortly give to God. Oh that such a thought might effectually persuade me to redeem it! that I may not tarry till the end of Time to know the worth of it, Let me not undervalue it, while 'tis given me to be used, that I may not eternally regret my folly, when Time shall be no more.

VII.

*Of the Ordinances of Heaven,
Day and Night, Summer and
Winter, Seed Time and Har-
vest,*

*vest, their order and succession
establisht by God, is the effect
of Infinite Wisdom and Good-
ness. What they may teach us.*

WHen I consider the Beginning of another year, I can hardly avoid reflecting on its several parts, summer and winter, spring and fall, and day and night, and their alternate Turns. This calls me to observe and admire his Eternal power and Godhead, Wisdom and Truth, who is the Great Author of this admirable variety. Who hath fixed the Earth with his Foot, and hanged it on nothing. and settled the Luminaries of Heaven for Excellent Ends: *The Sun to rule by day, and the Moon by night,* therby to distinguish Times and Seasons, to separate Day and Night, Winter and Summer, and consult the convenience and
com-

On Time and Eternity, 49

coin. ful of Man and Beast by
their doe fucceffion. *The Day is*
thine, the Night alfo is thine,
thou makeft Summer and Winter.
How wonderfull is their order,
Beauty and constant cours! that
when the fun withdraws, and the
fadows of the Evening cover the
Earth with darknefs, to conclude
the *Day*; the Moon and Stars fup-
ply the place of the abfent Sun
during the *Night*: and that tho
they differ in length, yet gradually
leffen till they are both equall
at the years end, and have made
the fame circuit. How excellent
a work of God is that quick fuc-
ceffion to one another. The fup-
pofition of a *perpetual night*, is
a difmal gloomy thought, O
what will the Everlafting Dark-
nefs of the Infernal prifon be!
The Sun by day inlightens the
Earth, directs our motion, gui-
des our way, governs our Tra-
vail

vail, assists conversation, awakens Industry, warms the Earth and Air, gives life, and vigor, and fruitfulness to all things under the Sun, and makes the whole Inferior Creation to rejoice. An Emblem of God's universal Goodness, who is kind to all his creatures. How admirable is its Lustre! how glorious is its Light! how loudly doth it proclaim his power and wisdom! who made this, and the other Lights of Heaven, by his powerful word, and preserves them hitherto by his daily Providence. If God be now so glorious, contemplated in his works, considered in the lustre of the created sun, viewed only thro the windows of sens; how much more glorious will he appear hereafter, when we shall see him face to face, and nothing interpose betwixt us and his incomparable Light? If mine Eyes
darle

darie to look upon the meridian Sun, in what inaccessible Light must he dwell, who is *the Father of Lights*? If this lower world, the common receptacle of his Friends and Enemies, have so much of his Glory vouchsafed them by the Heavenly Bodies; O what a place will *Heaven* be, where shall be no *Sun* or *Moon* nor need of any, *but the Glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb be the Light therof*. While I thus consider the *Sun* and the *Day*, I must not think the *Night* is useless: which discovers another part of the Heavens, not discernible by *Day*, viz the *Stars* and *Planets*, refreshing the *Earth*, cooling the *air*, giving necessary rest to the *Creatures*, &c. their order, motions, aspects, oppositions, influences, are all usefull, and Instructive. The

agreeable mixture of Light and Darknes, the regular succession of Day and Night within a few hours, are exceeding wonderfull, and advantagious. In other parts of the world, where the Sun beams are more direct and its heat excessive, God hath made amends by the length of the *night*, (under the Equinoctial line it is allways 12 hours) and in the more northern parts, where the Influence of the Sun is weaker, the *days* are proportionably longer. So good is God to all his Creatures, in all parts of the world! As the morning and evening answer to the day of 24 hours, so doth Spring and Autumn to the 12 moneths of the year: that we may not pass immediately from one extreme to another; but gradually be disposed for so great a change, as is between summer and winter, between

tween winter and summer. So mercifull and gracious, and infinitely wise is God in all his works! so that we cannot say, one part of the year is more necessary then another. The *winter* is as usefull for the good of the universe, as the *summer*: in this we are supplied with what is necessary to maintaine us in that, and the admirable situation of the Sun, (most probably) in the center of the world, seems much to contribute to it. If it had been at a farther distance from us, our earth would have been in a manner desolate; because the influence of the sun could not have been considerable: and if it had been nearer, the stars above would have wanted Light, and this Earth in under been burnt up. The Excellent order which it hath now obeyed for above six thousand years, is also

wonderfull. The sun never stood still but once, and that by a miracle. tho much inferior to that of its daily Progress. What a subject is here to admire the Power, goodness, Wisdom, and Faithfulness of God? *Lord! what is man!* for whom then dost all this? and because I find every year that the Day dies into night, the summer into winter, and herbs and plants lose their beauty and verdure, and shed their blossoms; may I not hence learn to consider and prepare for my own approaching Change? In prosperity, health, and ease, and life, to expect, and make provision for trouble, sickness, paine, and Death? as every wise man in summer would do for winter; and work with all my might, *while it is called to day*, while the Light continues, because the night of darkness is at hand, when none can work.

Of

VIII.

Of Evills to be Expected in this Year the wisdom and mercy of God, in concealing from us the knowledg of Future Events.

Not only few, and uncertaine, but *Evill* likewise are the days of the years of my Life, may every one say, with the Patriarch *Jacob*. A sufficient portion of evil for every year may well be expected, when our Lord tells us, there is a certaine measure allotted for every day. *Sufficient to the day is the evil of it.* Not only is our Life short, but troublesome, full of vexatious mixtures. We can not sing a *Requiem* to our souls, when one Great Calamity is past; for we know not, in this Region of Changes, but another, a greater may be at hand.

one messenger of ill news may succeed and out doe another, as it was with *Job*. We come weeping into the world in a most helpless forloen state: and if we escape the dangers of Infancy, and the casualties of childhood; and after that, out live the snares & follies of youth; we are tost upon the Pikes of Time and Chance, and sadden and disquiet our selvs with a thousand griefs and sorrows, by inevitable and unexpected occasions, tho we increas the number of needless Cares and Fears, and discontents; till at length a sudden stroke arrests us, we fetch a groan, and dye. Who can give a Catalogue of the Afflictions and Calamities, Perplexities and Disapointments, incumbrances, crosses, and Evill accidents of Humane Life? by means whereof millions are disconsolate and sad, mourne and complaine,
weep

weep and sigh, and from day to day are *fed with the Bread of Affliction, and the water of Adversity.* Not to mention mens fluctuating restless thoughts of Heart, importunate, desires, bated projects, defeated Purposes, which suppose or bring vexation. A good share of these is not to be avoided; and yet very few can be particularly fore seen. who could prognosticate a year agoe the Evills which have happened since? publick and private, personal and relative, to the Countries, Cities, Families, and persons we are concerned for? and who can certainly foretell the Events of this insueing year? God hath intermixt Good and Evill in the Life of Man: he hath set Prosperity against Adversity, saith *Solomon*, to the end, *that man should find nothing after him.* 7. *Eccles.* 14. that he may not

know what shall come next, wither a Prosperous or a Calamitous Event. What a change may be made in a year by the meer Casualty of humane Events? by the Treachery of friends, or the malice of Enemies, or the more immediate hand of God? We know not *what shall be on the morrow*, much less what a twelve moneth may produce. Because what ever may be disposed to happen, from natural causes, or Civil counsels, may be altered by a perticular decree of Providence. Prepare me Lord! and every of those in whose Felicity I more especially take part, for all the Calamities and Sorrows, thine Infinite Wisdom shall think fit to exercize us with, this following year: and by thy mercifull Providence, and gracious Conduct, cause them to work for Good Furnishing us with suitable strength and wisdom,

to acquiesce in thy good pleasure, and obey thy Will. I thank thee, *O Heavenly Father !* that thou hast reserved the knowledg of future Times and Seasons to thy self; and hid Events from men. Least by considering them certaine, we should presume in case they are *Good*; or should despairingly afflict our selves, by foreseeing the *Evill* we know to be inevitable. Did we certainly foreknow the *Good* that would befall us, we should not Trust in thee to bring it to pass, or heartily implore thy Care and conduct. Did we foresee the *Evills* we shall suffer, before they overtake us, we should be overwhelmed with diffidence and Despair. Many a Mother who rejoiceth at the Birth of a son, would mourn to foresee what a man, what a Son he will prove. Such an *increas of knowledg would increas our sorrow* such a

Prescience would transport and discompose us, by unseasonable Joys and Sorrows, born out of Time, make us Remiss in our Duty to thee, and weaken our Dependance on thine unerring Wildom, Truth, and Power.

IX.

The Supposition of dying this Year, should be improved: the consequence of redeeming time, and providing for Eternity farther prest. The Folly of Elder persons is condemned and checkt from the Example of Children. 'Tis adviseable to familiarize the thoughts of Death, and to imagine before hand what apprehensions of things we shall then have.

THe longest Life is but a day multiplied: and who can cer-

certifie or assure me, which will be my *last*? He only who was God as well as man, could say, *Mine Hour is not yet come*. Is all my Life given me to resolve this Question? *Whither I shall be in Heaven or Hell for ever*? And have I any time to lose, and squander away, as superfluous? have I any more then needs? 'Tis no impossible or unreasonable supposition to make, that *I may dye this year*. Let me admit that thought, and imagine my self on a bed of sickness, wearied with paine, and ready to leave this world: the Physitians gone; despairing of my recovery: my friends about me weeping: and all things in a doleful melancholy posture, suited to such a state: feeling within my self the presages of Death: expecting the final stroke, in an hour or two more. What is *then* the value of

sensual Pleasures, can I then relish or savor them? what *then* is Honour to *me*, who shall never goe abroad more to receive it, till carried to my grave? will it *then* comfort me to have lived in Reputation, and Applause, if my Heart was not humble under it, and the Honour of God promoted by it? can Riches and a great estate support me, when I am just packing up for a removal to the other world? in that hour will it be any satisfaction, to have made a stir and noise for a few years upon Earth, to be talkt of for a while longer then other men? are thes the things my dying thoughts will be most concerned to reflect on? Thes dignities pleasures and possessions offerd to a dying man, would rather opraide then tempt him; they come too late, as a Princes pardon to a man whose head is off. Dye
I must,

I must , and appear before my Judge , to answer for all that I have received and done in the body. Fool that I was , (shall I then too justly say to my self,) not to have considered this, much sooner! not to have provided for it at a better rate! my sins stare me in the face, my conscience tells me I am not ready for such a Trial: I have lived a stranger to such thoughts as now I cannot refuse, and which should have been admitted sooner. But if to such a state any hope of mercy may be granted, (tho it be unspeakably little,) yet I cannot promise my self any such warning by sickness. The *sleeping virgins* were called at *Midnight*, and so may I. where can I pitch my Tents on Earth to be secure against a sudden remove? *Lord!* make thes thoughts effectual to prevent my loss of precious Time, which
at

at such a season, will be esteemed precious, tho now it be not. O how swift, how short, my *Time of Trial* in order to *Eternity*! how difficult, how important a work is it to prepare for an Everlasting state! what is all this world, how little, how meer a nothing, to a departing soul! and shall I after such reflexions, continue to pursue shadows, and pleas my self with empty dreams? when being so near my final Judgment, the common wisdom of a man requires me to mind it in good earnest; and be more solicitous about it then for any Thing Temporal? O in what manner will Death open mine eyes? by shutting the windows of sens, how shall I then see the nothingness of what is but Temporal, and the reality of what is Eternal! We sometimes laugh to see the vanity of *little Children*, who are greatly pleased

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fed with painted toys, and busily imployed about trifles. It extorts a smile to see them eager, and industrious, and mightily concerned in their childish sports: to see them fight or weep for little things which we despise: to observe with what sollicitude and care they raise a little fabrick which three moments after they themselves pull down, or would otherwise tumble of its own accord. We laugh at thes, but should weep over our selves, as the *greater and Elder Fools*: who are every whit as Silly, yea infinitely more so: that considering we know the frailty of our present Life, and can look beyond the Grave to another world, should yet mispend our precious Time on things which cannot profit; and pleas our selves with what is so unsuitable to our Age and State; and suffer our passions to work
with

with violence, for a thing of nought; and our greatest diligence, care, and zeal to be exercised on things impertinent and vaine; that are perishing in themselves, and can contribute nothing to our Eternal welfare. And is it not thus with reference to all that men toyl and labor for with the neglect of an immortal State?

The voluptuous Sadducee will not refuse the present gratification of his sensual appetite, because he is uncertaine of another day. *Let us eat and drink for to morrow we dye.* Should not the same motive quicken my diligence in a better work? and because my Lord may *come suddenly as a thief in the night*, immediately prepare to meet him? Let me now therefore, o my soul! look forward to the end of Life and Time! and so let me esteem and seek,

seek, and choos, and do every thing in the first place, which then I shall wish I had! Let me do nothing now, which I verily believe I shall then be ashamed, or sorry to reflect on: that by thinking what a condition I shall then wish to have my soul in, I may now provide my self, much better then I have done hitherto. That while I am in the greatest probability of living, I may suppose my change to be near, and so not dare do any thing, but what I would or might do, if I were in the present expectation of Death. To this end, let me goe down to the *Potters house*, descend to the consideration of my mortality, and dwell among the Tombs: remembering the *Egyptians* built themselves better Tombes then Houses, because they were to dwell longer in them. Let every nights repose serve me as a memo-

morial of my last sleep! and let my Bed stand for the model of my Coffin! This is the only way, to be dead to this world, to be able to judge of things now, as we shall do after death, according to immutable Eternal Truth.

X.

The Brevity of Life considered as the fruit of sin. There are but three ways of leaving this world, as Abel, Adam, or Enoch. A diligent improvement of Time farther prest: and the neglect of it bewailed.

THe shorting of our Days is the fruit of sin. We dye because we have sinned, and yet we should not sin as now, if this were not forgot, that we *must* dye. From the First Transgression of *Adam* we derive our death: and therefore

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fore some of his Posterity lived longer then he. Which proves that the lengthning of our Days is the peculiar Gift of God; and yet 'tis such a Gift as was more desired formerly, then since the appearance of Christ: for we read of none in the New Testament, since *Life and Immortality is brought to Light by the Gospel*, who desired a long continuance here on earth. Were we delivered from sin, the sting of Death, by having made our peace with God in the Bloud of Jesus, Death would not be frightfull, or put on such a ghastly vizor, as to molest it doth. But we are uncertaine of our Justification, we waver between hopes and Fears as to our Final Sentence; and are conscious to our selves that we are not ready for our great Account. This makes Death so terrible. Considering with all that

that it is inevitable : *the way of all the Living*. For tho the curs be removed, and the sting be taken out by our H. Saviour ; so that the Souls of Believers are safe, and shall not be toucht by the second Death : yet God hath not taken away the stroke of it from the Body : tho a Christian is assured of deliverance from Hell, he is not exempted from the Grave, as his passage to Heaven.

Prepare me, Lord ! by the free Remission of all my sins, and make me meet for the Blessed Inheritance, by sanctifying grace ; and then thy Time is best ; *Thy Holy will be done*. No matter then, wither my Death be *violent*, or what we call *Naturall*. It will be one of the *two*, for I can't expect to be *Translated*, by a miraculous change, as Holy *Enoch* was, and as they shall be, who shall

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shall be found alive at the world, when our Glorious Judge shall come againe. There are but those *three ways* of leaving Earth: and the *Three First Men* of whose departure we read in Scripture, are Instances of all Three. *Abel* of a violent *Death*, *Adam* of a natural one, and *Enoc* of a Translation. The variety and order of their Departure, as one observes, is very admirable, and deserves to be considered. For all mankind must follow one or other of those three Examples. Every man or woman, that is born into the world, must leave it by one of those three ways, Either be cut off by a *violent Death*, as *Abel*, the *first* man who dyed: or dye a *Natural Death*, as *Adam* did, who was the *second*: or be *translated*, as *Enoc*, who was the *Third* we read of.

But tho I know that within a
few

few years at farthest I must leave this world by one or other of these ways; tho I have been dying ever since I began to live; am Dead to the last year, and to all the preceding Portions of my Time; and know withall, that what remains will quickly passe and be gone, after the same manner; yet how have I overloved this Body, as if I should never live out of it! and set my Heart and affections on this world, as if I should never remove to another! and trifled away my precious Time and Life, as if a change would never come!

That few do seriously admit such thoughts is too evident, by the general cours and practise of their Lives. For to what hazards do men expose themselvs? what pains will they take? what Inconveniencies will they bear? with what unwearied Industry will they
toyl

toyl and labour, to get a little money, or honour in this world, to they know not but they may be called out of it, before the end of this year? And yet the same persons are remisse and slothfull about a future Life; negligent and unconcerned about an Eternal state; careless and indifferent, yea sottishly stupid, about the wellfare of their Immortal Souls. Henceforward, o my Soul! what ever others do, let me resolute to live in the expectation of *a change*, which I know is *certaine*, and may be very *near*.

XI.

Of the Expectation of Another Life. The vanity and misery of man in his Best Estate, if there be none. The satisfactory removal of that supposition by the thoughts of God, and of Eter-
D *nal*

L Et me retire a little, o my Soul! and bethink my self, what a world this is : what men design and seek, and do and suffer : with what false and feigned Joys they are pleased, being only happy by comparison : and with what real sorrows then are afflicted : what innumerable disappointments, sicknesses, (and as troublesome remedies,) dangers, labors, pains, and calamities of all sorts ; multitudes groan under, and loudly complaine of : and what little unworthy ends are pursued by all that do not seriously seek Eternal Rest? and how often frustrated? and withal consider the cares that disquiet us, the errors that deceive us, the many Temptations that assault and overcome us : how busie we
are

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are about vanities, how often dejected; and melancholy for the breaking of a bubble, how eager and industrious to pursue a shadow; active and in earnest to destroy our selves, and one another; and then reflect on the malice, and cruelty, the filthiness, and impiety, and great corruption, which abounds every where; whereby God is dishonored and provok't to anger. After this what a Theater of Tragedies, must this world appear? what an Hospital of sick, and diseased, or rather distracted Persons? How should I be tempted to say, *Lord! why hast thou made all men in vaine?* If I could not look from this sea of troubles, to the Haven of Rest: from this dark Prison, to the Region of Light: from this deceitfull, troublesome, and defiling *Earth*, to a Blessed, Everlasting *Heaven*. For verily,

if there be no world but this, *every Man in his Best estate* in this world, *is altogether vanity*, *Selah.* 39. *Pf.* 5. 'Tis a certaine undoubted Truth, the prefixed *verily* tells us so; and that it deserves to be well considered, we learn from the concluding *Selah.* *Every man is vanity.* Not the Inferior parts of the Creation only, But *man* the Lord of all and *Every man*, every Adam from himself, to the last man that shall by ordinary generation descend from him. Not the Ignorant, poor or wicked only, but all the Individuals of this Species. Young or old, strong or weak, beautifull or deformed, rich or poor, high or low, good or bad, in respect of the Body, and this present Life, every one is vanity; and this is true, suppose him in his *Best Estate*, not only in helpless Infancy and childhood, or in decrepit

crepit old age not only in paine,
and poverty, and disgrace, but
in his most settled, most flourishing,
most envied, and admired condition
upon Earth, in the midst of
strength, and wit, and honour;
when at best, as to body, and mind,
and outward Circumstances;
when he looks fairest, when he
shines brightest; in the height of
all his glory, with the greatest
likelihood of a Continuance: yet
then he is but *vanity*. In his frame,
in his temper, constitution,
inclinations, actions and employment;
he is a meer shadow, an
empty mutable inconsiderable
thing, and not to be accounted
of. His Heart, his head, his
imaginations, reasonings, desires,
purposes, projects, hopes,
and fears, are all vanity; and *altogether*
vanity, in all the parts,
and kinds, and particulars of it.
He not only *may* be, but *he is so*,

in his best estate: if this world be his *Best*; If this be *our all*; and nothing more to be expected after death. And how should such a Reflexion strike me to the Heart, to suppose that after a few years are ended I must return to my first nothing, and my very being be swallowed up of Eternal Death! what satisfaction can I then take in any present Injoyments, if an eternal annihilation be at hand when I must bid adieu for ever to all that I now possess? What delight can I have in the ordinary comforts of Life, with this belief, that within a year or two, it may be to morrow, I shall sink into dust, and exist no more? What pleasure in any thing with this dismal expectation? The more flourishing my condition in this world, the more should I dread to lose it, if nothing, better nothing at all, can

*Vid. Mr.
Humes ra-
nity of
Man as
Mortal.*

can be enjoyed after Death. Some Philosophes have ignorantly urged such a consideration as an Antidote against the fear of Death: but the admission of it may rather deprive a man of all the Comfort of Life. What then is the advantage of a wise man above a Fool? the exercise and improvement of our noblest Faculties would render us more miserable than others, if nothing be expected, and certain, when this Life is over. Not only sensual but Intellectual Pleasures would be disturbed and destroyed by such Thoughts; that very shortly, the next Year, or Day, I must disappear; and all my Injoyments and Hopes be utterly and for ever lost, with my very Being. Were the case thus, (which such Consequences evince it is not,) it were better for most men they had never been born; wither

their condition here be Prosperous, or Afflicted. For what Comfort or quiet can any man have in Plenty and *Prosperity*, when this frightfull apprehension of an approaching end is ever present? and what consolation can it yeild a man who is afflicted and *Calamitous*, and yet loves his Life above all things; to think that he shall not ceas to be miserable, but by ceasing to be? And what is become of all Religion, if such a thought be entertained? all devotion to God is therby extinguisht, all the restraints of vice removed, the floud gates of Impiety, opened, the encouragements of vertue, the rewards of Holiness, the foundation of Patience in Tribulation, and suffering for Righteousness sake; all at once taken away. Lord! confirm my belief of the invisible future state of Rewards and Punish-

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nishments! and let not *Sadduceism* and *Infidelity* damp my zeal in thy service, or rob me of the comforts of *this Life*, which, if I have any solid ones, must suppose the hopes of a *Better*. Let others therefore, *o my Soul!* who expect not an Everlasting Heaven beyond the Grave, place their affections on Earthly things and mind this world, as if there were no better, no other. Let them who doubt, or disbelieve the promised rewards of *Eternity*, take up with what they must shortly leave, and labor for the Bread that perisheth. But since I profess to believe and seek the Life Everlasting; let me dayly intertaine myself with the hopes of it, and let all the flattering dreams of what is desireable upon Earth, give place to nobler and better Thoughts. Let me derive my principal Joy, from the promise

and expectation of that future felicity, and indeavor nothing more then a meetness to pertake of it. *O my God, my God!* thou art my Life and Joy, and Portion; in thee, and in thy love, all my desires, and hopes are answered, and all my wants supplied. How ever Evill this world is made by sin, yet thou art the infinite and supreme Good. How mutable, how uncertaine, how perishing soever are all sublunary things, yet thou art the rock of Ages, the fountaine of Everlasting Life, and hast apointed another world, and another Life, when this is ended, wherein thou wilt be better known, and loved, and served, and honored, and communicate thy self more abundantly then now, to those the desire of whose souls is towards thee, that believe and love thee, that partake of thine image, and are devoted to
thy

thy fear. The assurance of this and nothing els, will answer the objection of the present *vanity* and *misery* we are subject to.

XII.

The consideration of the Death of others, especially of Relations, Friends, and Acquaintance, how to be improved. What instructions we may learn by the sight of a Dead Carcass, or a Deaths-head, and the usual Motto on it: and what by the Death of Holy Persons, to quicken our desires to be as they.

HAth divine Patience added one year more to the number of my Days, when so many others were removed by Death the last year? Others, whom a few months since I knew in vigorous health; wiser, stronger, more

likely to live, and to answer the ends of Life then me: some of them, my near Relations, and usefull Friends; in whose converse I took delight, and promised my self advantage by their Company and Exemples; But they are taken, and I am left. Thy Holy will, o Lord! is done: and they, who were prepared, are infinite Gainers by this my loss. Quicken my preparations by following their piety, to meet them in thy Heavenly Kingdom. Let thy long suffering lead me to Repentance; and suffer me not to slight thy warning by the death of others, to expect my own. *Lord!* cure my Earthly mindedness, and practical unbelief? and by all such admonitions of thy Providence, teach me to possess, and use this world; as knowing I must shortly leave it, and let not the thoughts of my mortality wear

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wear off, as soon as the funeral of my Friends is over.

Every year some or other of our Acquaintance drop into the Grave, we attend them thither, and lament, it may be, for a few days, their departure and removal; but consider not, that others will ere long do the same for us; it may before *this* year is ended. Oh how soon do we forget our deceased Friends, and our selves, who are likewise dying! and count upon a long life, which we cannot reasonably expect! and hug the injoyments of this transitory world, as if our present state would last for ever! Will nothing but our own dissolution effectually convince us of our mistake, and folly, in this perticular?

Tho the arrows of Death fly continually round about us; sometimes over our *heads*, when Superiors are taken away; some-

times fall at our *feet*, when Children and Servants and inferiors dye; sometimes on our *left hand*, when an Enemy is cut off; and while I am pleased with that, in that very hour, it may be, another arrow on our *right hand* strikes the Friend of our bosome and delight: and can we see all this, that great and smal, high and low, friends and foes are all vanity, and drop down dead round about us; and shall we not consider, that we are as vaine as they, and must shortly follow? shall we not by a Christian *Chymistry* extract Spirits out of thes dead Bones? and by thes Examples learn *the End of all Men*, and lay it to heart?

When ever I see the funeral of another, let me think thus with my self; why might not I have been that man or woman, that is now carried to the Grave?

If

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If we had been compared a few days since, 'tis probable I should have been thought as likely to have been his monitor by dying first as he mine. By such an improvement of the warnings, the request of Dives to *Abraham* were in great measure granted; for 'tis a call from the dead that speaks loudly to us, to consider our selves, and prepare in time for so great a change: and say, as the Prophet to *Hezekiah*, *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt dye.*

Can we look upon a *Deaths-head*, and not remember what we shall shortly be? may not much be learnt from its common motto? *Sum quod Eris, Fueramque quod Es.* *I am that which thou shalt shortly be, and have been that which thou art now:* that is, I have been as gay and jocund, as brisk and merry, as proud and
vaine,

vaine, as rich and great, as careles and secure, as honourable and as much esteemed, as beautifull and as well beloved, as witty and as learned, as thou *art* or canst be now. I valued my self as much upon my estate, and trade, and health, and beauty upon my education, profession, imployments, parts, friends, family &c. as thou hast ever done, or canst doe: I lived in ease and pleasure, in mirth and jollity; I minded the world as much, and indulged my self as much in sensuality; and was as carefull of my body, and pampered and pleased my flesh as much as thou, and thought as little of a sudden death, and prepared as little for such a change, as thou dost: but now my dry Bones are lookt upon with contempt and scorn, but thou shalt shortly return to dust, and be as vile as I am,

It

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It cannot but affect us, did we consider it, to see Divers snatcht away in their Youth, and outward Prosperity; and in the midst of their sin and folly, without any visible signs of true Repentance: or in terrible anguish and horror for their past crimes: and yet how few do take the warning, carefully to prevent the like unhappiness? *O Lord!* preserve those strong Convictions, those serious thoughts, those holy Resolutions, those lively apprehensions of the Life to come, of the Evill of sin, and the Terrors of thy wrath, which the Sight of dying persons hath at any time awakened in my soul! *O* the Eloquence of a dying sinner to persuade to Repentance! even when he hath lost his speech, and lays gasping, and trembling, on a bed of sickness; breathing out his last faint breath, and passing into
the

the other world, to answer for the crimes and follies of a wicked Life! *Lord!* revive thes thoughts upon my soul, and let me feel the power and influence of them, in the hour of Temptation, and in every time of need! And let the consideration of *the death of Believers*, the Blessedness they are thereby entred into, and the Holiness they are to posses'd of, quicken my desires and diligence to prepare to follow. When I think where they are, and what they are doing, what is their work, and what their state, what their continual imployment, and what their Injoyments; and how different from ours: I cannot but wish to be with them: to be as they are, and do as they do, to know and love and praise God as they. They are not hindred by such a clog as this body is to us; or tempted by their senses, appetite,

tite, and fancy, to sin against him: they complaine not of a seducing flesh, unruly passions, low and disordered thoughts, of Temporal afflictions, spiritual deservations, the snares of the world, and the malice and subtilty of the Devil: we who are Pilgrims and Travellers are exposed to these difficulties, and storms which they are freed from. They are now rejoycing in the light of God's countenance, and shall never question his love more, while we are in Tears and sorrows, groaning to be delivered.

But think, o my soul! that *they* were lately such as *we are now*. They were members of the militant Church, before they entred into joy and Triumph. They had their conflicts and difficulties, their hour of Temptation, and time of trial, as we have *ours*. They were slandered, and per-
se-

secuted, and sadned, and disappointed, as their Followers are: They went to Heaven the same way, and got the victory after the same manner, by Repentance, and Faith, and humble persevering Obedience. *They* were once imperfect as we are now; and complained of the Body of Sin and Death, and struglings of unmortified lust, as we doe: and were sometimes in the dark about their intrest in the promise, and walkt heavily by the hiding of God's face, and indured Temptation, *even as we*. And as we have nothing to doe, or suffer, but what they met with; we have the same encouragement, that administred to their support: the same God and Saviour, the same way and rule, the same assistance, by the aids of his H. Spirit, offered us; the same promises, and the same rewards proposed, which they

they injoyed, first in faith and hope, and afterwards in fruition. Yea they pass'd thro the dark valley, and so must we: their Earthly Tabernacle was dissolved, and so must ours be. We must expect to goe the same way to Rest and Glory; and wait God's Time for our admission. We must finish first the work which God hath for us to doe and suffer; and then all Tears shall be wipt from our eyes, we shall grieve no more, we shall sin no more, but be as the Angels in Heaven, or as the Spirits of the Just made Perfect.

XIII.

What Influence the consideration of Eternity would have upon our Hearts and Lives, if soundly believed and considered. Especially if the supposition of Dying this year be annexed to it.

With

With what Humility, mortification, and self denial, what seriousness, watchfulness, and resolved constancy, would every Christian live on Earth, did he act allways under the influence and power of a confirmed Faith, concerning the Life to come? We should not then grudge at a little labor, or boggle at a few difficulties in our way. What tho I meet with injuries and affronts, hardships and inconveniencies: being now in a forreign country, and every day I live, one days journey nearer my Eternal Home! Shall I not patiently bear momentany sorrows, while I believe I am hastening to Eternal Joys? Did I look more to *the Everlasting World*, should I not make the pleasing of God, in order to my Eternal welfare, the great Business of my Life? Should I not serve the Lord with more
fer-

fervency of Spirit, and be better fortified against the Fears of man, who can but hurt and kill the Body, nor that neither, without the permission of God? Should I not order all my affaires, answer all Temptations, mortifie in ward Lusts, live in the Exercise of Grace, and in circumspect persevering Obedience, in order to it? Should I not watch more over my Heart, and Lips and Ways, be more diligent to trim my Lamps, more dead to this world, more carefull to call my self frequently to an account, to renew my Repentance? Would not my converse be more usefull and edifying, my discourses more savory, and full of Religion, my Prayers to God, more humble and earnest, my charity to men more unfeigned and extensive, and my preparations every way more suitable to such a Faith, and

to

to such apprehensions of an Everlasting State? Could we carry the thoughts of *Eternity* about with us every day, and often admit them in our civil and secular affairs, did we repeat it frequently to our selves, at least every morning, as soon as we are awake, that we are near *Eternity*; this graine of Incense would perfume the whole Temple; and be an Antidote against inward Lust, and impure thoughts, against the Infection and defilement of bad Company, and the snares of worldly Business, and do much to prevent vaine and sensual actions, and to cure vaine affections.

Did we believe it, and believe it *near*, should we not take as much pains to secure Eternal life, as we see men doe to get Riches? Should we not use the same diligence, care, and circumspection, the same prudent foresight, watchfulness,

fulness, and perseverance, to prevent Everlasting destruction as others doe to provide against Poverty, and to live in Plenty a little while on Earth? Should we not rejoyce as much in the promise and hopes of it, as others do in the prospect and expectation of some Earthly Advantage? Lord! I confess and bewail the weakness of my faith. How often have I concluded, and said, that *Heaven* alone is the place of Happiness, and yet my carnal Heart is too much affected with Earthly Things! How often have I resolved, (upon the conviction of the certainty of *the Eternal world*,) to mind *this* less, and to affect and seek it no more as I have done! and yet my foolish Heart is hankering after it still. O crucifie my affections to things below! and let the believing Thoughts of the next Life, render

E der

der me victorious over all the Temptations of this. Pardon and cure the staggering trembling Thoughts of an unbelieving Heart, by greater measures of a lively *Faith*. That my desires may be strong and urgent; and my diligence and steadfastness in the way of Truth, be some way correspondent to the important Article. Let me live only for *Eternity*, hope for nothing but *Eternity*, design and intend nothing as my chief end, but *Eternity*, and seek and mind nothing in comparison with *Eternity*! Did we believe it, how would every thing in this world be look't upon as eligible, or fit to be refused, as it is like to be an help, or an hindrance, with reference to *Eternity*! we should then endeavor to do nothing unbecomming such an Expectation. Considering this world as our passage, and the invisible

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sible future world as our abiding Country; where we are to dwell forever; what ever we meet with *here*, wither sweet or bitter, easy or troublesome, pleasing or ungrateful, we should not much matter, but as it relates to *hereafter*.

And were I certaine I should have no longer time of Trial in order to this Eternal State, then *this one year*, which is now begun; if a Messenger from God, should convincingly assure of it; what would I not doe to prepare for *Death*, and secure the Intrests of *Eternity*? with what remorse and deep *Repentance* should I reflect on the Follies of my past Life? with what importunate cries should I beg *Forgiveness*? how patiently should I bear *Calamity*, for so short a time? how little should I value the favors or frowns of men? how circumspect to improve every *Season* of doing

and receiving good? how carefull to avoid *Temptation*, and how resolute in resisting it? Did I verily believe I had no longer time to live on Earth, then this one year at most: how insipid would be the offer of carnall mirth, vaine pastime, sensual diversions, idle company &c.? how should I value every hour, every inch of my little *Time*, under the apprehension that *Eternity* is at hand? O my soul! shall I make no provision against the possibility of such a case? is not my change as certaine, as if it were this year, as if it were to morrow? tho I am not certaine it is so near, nor certaine but it may be. Let me then *seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*: let me fix it well, and make it clear, that I have secured my great Concern, and am ready for a sudden summons.

How

XIV.

*How a Good man may improve,
and encourage himself under the
supposition of dying this Year,
even in the most uneasy and un-
desireable circumstances.*

I *May dye this year:* then all
my cares and fears, if I am
Rich, all my sorrows and cala-
mities as to this world, if I am
Poor, will die too. *I may dye this
year:* then I shall have no more
Enémies, no more sickness, and
which is infinitely better, I shall
sin no more. *I must shortly dye,*
it may be, this year: but there is
no other way to come to a Blessed
Life but by dying, and my Sa-
viour hath dyed for me, and he
that believs in him, shall never
see death: he lives who was once
dead, yea he lives for ever more,

E 3 and

and hath promised, that I shall be with him to behold his Glory. He hath the Keys of Death and Hell: He is the Resurrection and the Life, he hath removed the thing of Death, and I need not fear a conquered Enemy. *If I dye this year*, I must quit the company of all my dearest *Friends* on earth; but I shall goe to *better Company* above: and if they are the friends of Christ, we shall shortly meet againe, and love one another in a better manner then now, and never more be parted. *I may dye this year*: my *Friends*, and *Enemies* may dye to. Let me injoy the *one* as mortal dying persons, that must ere long leave me or I them: and not fear the *other*, who may so soon perish, and quickly be incapable of doing me or others mischief. *I may dye this year*: let me not then think much of Temporal sufferings, of any Evils which

which may so soon be over. Oh what would condemned sinners in the other world give to be able to believe and say so of their sufferings! *I may dye this year:* and can I wonder that I am sometimes Sick, and in paine, and my Body out of order. Am I not mortal, and dwell in an house of clay, which must shortly moulder into dust? and is it any thing strange, that such a crasy Building doth sometimes shake, and need repair, and threaten a dissolution? 'Tis a greater wonder, I am any time well. That such a Body, compounded of so many little parts, and so easily disordered by innumerable accidents, should be in health, is hardly less to be admired, then that an Instrument of a thousand strings should be kept in Tune. I thank thee, O Heavenly Father! for the many advantages of sickness, to weaken

the power of sin, to humble my Pride, and cure my worldliness and sensuality, to reduce me from wandering, to empty me of self conceit, to awaken the consideration of Death and Judgment, to impress the Thoughts of the vanity of this world, and the Eternity of the next, to assist me to mortifie the flesh, to rule my Passions, to exercise Patience, and quicken Prayer, and try my faith and love, and excite my diligence to redeem Time, and convince me of the worth and uncertainty of it, and thereby promote my preparations for my final change. The Great Apostle by *dying dayly*, had as many victories over this world, as he lived Days. Oh that I might so far walk by the same Rule, as every day to think of providing for my last! and in health to do that which in sickness I shal wish I had done!

I may

I may dye this year: it may be by some tedious painful Sicknes, some troublesome and loathsome Disease. But God hath promised his Grace shall be sufficient: he will make my bed in my sickness: and put under his Everlasting arms, for my support; and not suffer me to be tempted above what I am able: he will increase my Patience and carry me thro the pangs of Death, and the dark valley, and *when Heart and flesh fail, be the strength of my Heart, and my Portion for Ever.*

I may dye this year: what if it should be by an hand of violence; if for Righteousness sake, in defence of the Truth, for a good Cause, and a good Conscience, and my peace be made with God, and am accused for doing well, or innocent of the Evil which is laid to my charge; there is ground enough for encouragement and

support. Thousands of my Betters have met with the like, whose names are precious & renowned. Innumerable Christians have dyed by the sentence of a *Judge*, with more chearfullness and Joy, then others, or it may be, then they themselves, would have done, by the sentence of the *Physitian*. The Torture of many diseases is unspeakably more formidable as to the meer paine: and for all the Rest, the Righteous Lord who loveth Righteousness, will clear my Integrity, if it may best subserve his own Great and holy ends: at least he will stand by and help me, when all forsake me: and if he speak Peace, and give inward Consolation, who can speak Trouble: and his final Judgment, which is near at hand, will distribute rewards and punishments to all, according to their works.

Sup-

Suppose farther, that I should want a *sepulcher*, after Death. There is nothing I could better be without. If God receive my Soul, and will raise my Body at the last day, wither it putrifie and consume under ground or above it, is no great matter. They who are alive will be more concern'd in that, then I shall be; Graves are for the sake of the Living rather then the Dead. The Sun, the Raine, the Air, Birds, Beasts, Worms, will all contribute to give me Burial, if men deny it. The only difference is, that it will be a little longer ere I am buried. If my soul rest in the Bosome of my Saviour, and by persevering in the love and practise of the Truth, I have secured my Reputation with wise and Good men, I need not be solicituous what become of my Body. My Almighty Judge will raise me a

glorious Body, like his own, and reunite it to my soul? As easily, as certainly, as for any of those, whose Bodies were preserved in Caves and Vaults, in Proud Sepulchers, and under stately Monuments.

I may dye this year: and shall not then have the satisfaction to see my Children or nearest Kindred educated & provided for, settled and disposed of. But is not the Everliving God the same? cannot he as well take care of them when I am gone, as now? answer all my prayers after my decease? and exercise that Fatherly care, wisdom, and love, which shall dispose of their conditions, save them from Temptations, and supply all their wants, and exceed all my desires, in reference to them? and fullfill his Covenant promise from generation to generation, to the Childrens
Chil-

Children of them that fear him?
O how weak is my Faith, that
cannot trust God in so common
and plaine a case!

Lastly, *I may dye this year:*
and not live to see the Ruine of
the Antichristian Kingdom, and
Interest, and the accomplishment
of many Excellent Promises,
which concern the Rest, and
Peace, and Purity, and Glory
of the Churches of Christ on
earth, in the latter days. But
have I not deserved by my pro-
voking unbelief, Ingratitude,
and Disobedience, to dye in the
Wilderness, and not behold the
promised land, or see the Peace
of Jerusalem? and will not the
strugglings of Satan to support
Babylon, infer a dismal night of
darkness and distress, before the
expected morning of deliveran-
ce? so that it may now if ever be
truly said, *Henceforth, Blessed*

are the Dead who dye in the Lord.
And if God will take me to himself in the other world, I cannot possibly be a looser; tho I should not see the Beginnings of a *New Heaven, and a New Earth*, in this. However I rejoyce in Hope, and pray incessantly for the Resurrection of the Witnesses, and the rebuilding of Sion, and the more plentiful Effusion of see the H. Spirit, (the great comprehensive promise of the Latter Times) to effect a glorious Kingdom for Christ on earth: and my Faith assures me, I shall hereafter the Son of God revealed from Heaven, clothed with Majesty, sitting on a cloud, leading the Heavenly Host, raising the Dead by his powerfull voice, summoning all the World to appear to Judgment, gathering his Elect, and finally destroying death, and him that had the power of it, the Devil,

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vil, condemning the wicked to Everlasting Destruction, but acquitting, honouring, and rewarding his poor members, with infinite and Eternal Blisse.

XV.

*Of Dying in a Forreign Country,
and of Dying Young. Considerations proper to Reconcile the mind to both.*

I May not live to the end of this year; God in his Providence having called me abroad, I may never see my *Native Country* more. Let me still remember, O my Soul! that wherever I am, I am travelling towards the Grave, and passing to another world: that I may live in all Places, as a Pilgrim and Stranger here on Earth; with Affections suited to my condition, becoming one who
is

is travelling in a Strange Land. Let me bear the Inconveniencies I may meet with in this world, as Strangers in their Travells are wont to doe. Let me not repine at the ill accommodations of an Inne, where I am to lodge but a night or two: but encourage my self with the assurance of better Entertainment at home, when my Pilgrimage is ended, and my Journey over. One of my dearest holy Friends, and Fellow Travellers, (whose memory will be ever precious, with those who knew him) quickly arrived to his Journeys end, and is entred into Rest betimes. Which of his Companions shall next follow, we know not, or how soon. Lord! make me apprehend the nearness of my change in every place: and if I am prepared for dying, no matter where it be. There is no one Country farther from the

Pre-

*Mr. Thomas Bent,
who dyed,
at Geneva,
May 10.
1683.*

Presence of God then another. The whole world may be considered as one Great House, and the several Kingdoms and Countries of it, but as different Apartments in the same house: and they who tarry at home are no more exempt from Death, then they who Travell abroad.

The Presence of my Gracious Father is every where the same: in some measure, Blessed be my God, I have hitherto found it so. And may I not rejoyce in God in a desert, in a Wilderness, tho all the World should forsake me; tho all the world should be against me? Should I have no other Friend or Helper; is not *God*, an infinite God, *Enough?* and without his favor and Presence; what can all this world do for me? If I am sick, and in danger of Death, among my *Relations* and *Friends*, it the comforts of the
All-

Allmighty do not refresh and delight my soul, *they* cannot: and if I want not *these* in my last agonies, no matter in what part or corner of the Earth I breath my last, If the word and promise of God be my Foundation, an holy Hope my anchor, Christ my Pilot, and Heaven my Country, I shall not fail of being landed there at last. Suffer me not to forsake thee, *o Heavenly Father!* while I live; and do not thou forsake me, in my last Hour; and let it come when and where thou wilt! If my Blessed Saviour will receive my departing soul at death, I am not solicitous in what Country, or part of the Earth it be.

And that I may not be unwilling in the flower of my Age and Time, *in Youth and Strength*, to leave this world; let me think often, that no one age or part of Life is more privileged against the

the stroke of Death then another. If I have done my work betimes, as my deceased *Fellow Traveller* had, is it not better to receive the Blessed Recompence, then to tarry longer, in a world of sin and suffering, absent from the Lord? Shall I not thereby escape a multitude of Temptations, sins and sorrows, which others by living longer are exposed to. If my Peace be made with God, what should make me willing to live at this distance from him? what should render this world so desirable, where God is so dishonored, where I am so often tempted to displeas him, and so often yeild to such Temptations: and may I not fear least I should fall into such scandalous and greivous sins, that may bring a publick reproach on the Gospell of Christ, and sadden the Hearts of all my Acquaintance who love the Lord
Jesus

Jesus in sincerity. And tho I should maintaine my Integrity, yet in this world my highest love and obedience to God, and my sweetest communion with him, is but imperfect. How many Impediments and Diversions do I dayly meet with, that deaden my Heart to Heavenly contemplations and affections? what disapointments and sorrow full disasters, to convince me this is not the place of Rest and Happiness? what smart Afflictions may some of my Relations prove? what dangerous snares may attend me in the remaining Portion of my Time? what opposition and hatred from men may the stedfast professing of the Truth, and fidelity to God expose me to? what publick national calamities may I have my share in &c.?

But if I consider *old Age* it self, which we doe desire to reach, what
and

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and how many are the Infirmities and Grievs, and troublesome Circumstances which attend that state, which dying young will prevent? are not most men who reach a very great old Age, helpless objects of Pitty? a Burden to themselves, and to all about them? And, (which commonly happens,) may I not *then* be as unwilling to dye, as at present? as loath then to leave the world as now, tho in a manner it will have left me? for how many old men, past the relish of sensual Pleasures, are yet inordinately fond of a longer Life!

Have I not been told by Heathens, as well as Christians, that 'tis not the length of Time but its improvement, that doth really make a *Long Life*? If I have answered the ends for which I were born, 'tis not too soon to dye. No man ever miscarried as
to

to his Everlasting Intrest, because his Life was short, but Evill. He that is prepared for Death, hath lived long enough: and should thank God for a speedy call to the possession of that Felicity, which the Holiest Saints on Earth desire and breath after. *Gideon* lost nothing by returning from victory, *while the Sun was yet high*. If I have wrought but a few hours in the vineyard, and done but a little service for my Lord and Master; and yet am dismiss, and rewarded, before the Rest of my Fellow Laborers, shall I repine, and think my Lord doth not be friend me? If he hath any farther Service for me, he will prolong my days, and make me diligent, I hope, and contended. Otherwise I pray he would make me ready to dye, and make me willing, and *desirous* to depart this Life. For to be only *content* to dye,
that

that I may be perfectly Holy, and fully Blessed, is me thinks too low for a Christian who acts like himself, believing the Certainty of his anowed Principles and Hopes, and knowing that *while we are present in the Body, we are absent from the Lord.*

XVI.

The contemplation of our approaching change may assist us to mortifie the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life to cure Ambition, and promote Contentment.

AL that is in the World, saith the Apostle, is the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life. The dust and ashes, of our own mortality duely considered and applied, will help to dead and extinguish each

each of thes. By *Pride* of *Life*, we lift up our selvs against Heaven, and despise our Maker: by *the lust of the Flesh*, we overlove and indulge the body, and study to gratifie the sensual Appetite: by *the lust of the Eyes*, our Desires are immoderate after Temporal and External Goods. The thought of our approaching End hath a tendency to oppose and mortifie these Lusts: to humble us before God; to take us off from the inordinate love of the Body; and to moderate our passions to Earthly Things. It may help us against *Pride*, by showing us the infinite distance between the Eternal self-sufficient God, and such poor Dust as we: who are but of yesterday, and if he uphold us not, and maintaine our souls in life, shall be laid in the dust to morrow. It will mind us of his Justice against *Sin*, the Parent

Parent of *Death*, and of all the miseries of our mortal state; and convince us of our weaknels to resist his will, or avoid his wrath. As to our fond affection to the Body, it may instruct us, that it deserves not to be so much accounted of; it will open our eyes to discern the preference of our Immortall souls, and what concerns them, to the interest of a perishing Body. It may convince us, that we are cruel and unkind to our very bodies, by overloving them, because we thereby contribute to their Eternal sufferings: and so teach us to love and use our bodies, as Servants to our Souls in this world; and as expecting to share in Glory with them, after the Resurrection. It may also help to moderate our desires after Earthly Good, and so cure the *Lust of the Eyes*, by letting us see the vanity, uncertainty, and short

duration of these things, and their insufficiency to make us Happy, and give us true Content.

The Thoughts of an approaching change may, if any thing will do it, damp the mirth of the *Luxurious Epicure*, and strike him into a fit of trembling, as did *Belsazzar's* handwriting on the wall. It may discover the distraction of living in pleasure, and of care to please the senses, and the fleshly appetite, when the End is so near. It may likewise check the folly of *Ambitious Designs*: that men should make so much ado to get into slippery places, from whence they may so easily fall. Where being puffed up with vaine applause, they forget themselves and their latter end, till their Life, and Glory expire together. Where are now the Great, and Mighty, and Honorable, who have made such a noise in the world?

world? what is now the difference between the dust of an *Alexander* or *Cesar*, and that of their meanest slaves or Captives? Could their dignities and earthly Glory preserve any of them, from the stroke of Death, or the Judgment of God, or without Repentance, from his condemning Sentence?

Think, o my Soul! how little it will shortly signifie, wither I have been known and honoured among men or no; any farther then God may be glorified by it. How should it suppress vaine Glory? to think of being one day esteemed, and worshipt, revered, and applauded by dying men, and laid in the Grave the next? Let me rather seek that Glory and Honour, to which Immortality is annex: and labor to be accepted with God, at whose Bar I must be judged, endeavor-

ing to keep the testimony of a good conscience: and then it is not much wither I pass thro good Report or Evill Report: no contempt, or frowns, or threatnings of men need then discourage me. Tho I should be trampled on by the foot of Pride, while others are happy in a dream for a little while; and it may be have a prosperous passage to damnation; I'll rather thank God for delivering me from their Temptations; and giving me the opportunity, and call, to hasten my Preparations for a Better World. Let God dispose of my Condition here, and Reputation too, as best shall please his Sovereign will: only be pleased to keep me upright, and to preserve me from Everlasting shame and confusion of Face, after the general Resurrection, and final Judgment! vouchsafe me a portion now in
thine

thine approving love, and own
me for Thine at last, in the Great
and Terrible Day of Reckoning;
that then I may hear the Blessed
Euge, and enter into my Lords
Joy!

XVII.

*The same Argument considered
farther, as dissuasive from
Worldlinefs, and Earthly mind-
edness: and as proper to con-
fute the vanity of long Projects,
and great Designs for this
World.*

ARe the years of my Life but
few, and they hastening to a
Period, and may this be my last?
Let me not then greedily covet
riches and abundance, and wast
my little time to scrape together
large Provisions, for many years
to come; when I have no assurance

to see the end of this. Is it becoming such a belief, to toyl from day to day, that I may lay up that which I must so soon leave? as if I were to spend and Eternity here on earth? and in the mean while neglect *the one thing Necessary*. Am I not upon the shore of Eternity? may not the next tide carry me off? and shall I spend my whole Life in Diversions from the maine Busines of it? have I nothing els to doe, but to gather shells, (if they were Pearls the absurdity, were still the same) and pile them upon heaps, till I am snatcht away past all Recovery? Shall I be regardless of an Eternal State, and run the hazard of being undone for ever, by sollicitous care about pretended *Necessaries* for a long abode on Earth? Much less for *superfluities*; when I am not certaine of the possession, this one year? Shall I magnifie and admire

mire what is so soon to be parted with? value my self upon thes things, so as to despise those that have less, and envy such as have more, and suffer my mind to be distempered, and my passions immoderate on every change of these things? Tho I know besides my own mortality, that to inforce the argument, there is a principle of Corruption in all these things; that our very Manna here in a little while will stink, and Bread, which is the staff of Life, moulder, our richest garments wax old and rot, silver and gold rust, and the greatest Beauty wither, and every thing that is Earthly decay and perish. And shall not this teach me to sit loose from all such Things? Can I imagine, that in my last hour it will be easier to part with much, then little? or better in the day of Judgment to have a great Estate

to answer for then a lesser one? We read concerning the Patriarch *Abraham*, (who rightly understood the transitory nature of riches, and his own mutable Condition,) that the only *purchase* he made with his riches, was a *Grave*: choosing to take possession of the land promised him, rather by a mark of his parting with it, than of his Possessing it. Did I think oftner and more seriously, *o my Soul!* of tarrying here but a little while; I should more easily be persuaded, that a little of this world were sufficient to carry me thro it. I should consider more that my *Heavenborn-soul* is made and designed for another, an endless World; and therefore should not so far forget his own *People*, and *Fathers house*, as eagerly to pursue and seek what is suited only to the Body, for a little while, and whereof a little
with

with Contentment will be sufficient.

The same Reflexion may be usefull to contract our Thoughts to present duty; that we may not perplex our minds with long designs and projects; which if we dyc this year, will come to nothing. Our great Business in this world is adapted to the little portion of Time, which is allowed us. Not that good Designs for the publick Benefit, may not be begun by one, and finish'd by others: or that we are not obliged prudently to provide for those who shall come after us, by attempting many Things of probable Advantage to Posterity. But considering the shortness, and uncertainty of Life, not only should the most necessary Things be first minded, and not put off by prosecuting such designs as may signifye some what to others, when we

are dead: but we should not now omit that which we may hope to compals our selves, to begin such things, whose accomplishment must depend on the Pleasure of our successors. Consideration and faithfull Counsell would in this case have prevented the fruitless expence of many mens Time and Money, which if otherwise imployed might have turned to good account to themselves and others.

And this heightens our folly, that while we pursue great projects in reference to this world, and dye without effecting them, our preparations for Eternity are neglected: and so we are suddenly cut off in the midst of our Folly, and *all our Thoughts perish*: how easily, how soon may they do so! the difference and distance between Death and Life, being no more then that of a Candle light-
ed,

ed, from its being blown out,
and if it is expos'd to all winds,
how quickly may that Happen?

XVIII.

*The consideration of the certaine
near Approach of an Everlast-
ing State amplifi'd, and prest,
to in force an Holy Life.*

IN this world we begin a
Year, and quickly come to the
end of it; and ere long the little
number of our years, and days,
will be expired. But when death
conveys us into the World of
Spirits, the day of Eternity shall
never be clos'd with an Evening.
Of how fearfull consequence is
that *Death*, by which an *Eternity*
must be decided! What atten-
tion, what seriousness, what di-
ligence, what care, doth the de-
cision of so important a matter

call for ! E T E R N A L ! what will be the next word , o my soul ! how much am I concerned to know it ! will it be Blessedness , or Misery ? will it be Life or Death ? This one word is the Joy of Angels , and the Horror of Devils ; the unspeakable Delight of blessed Saints , and the confusion and Despair of condemned Sinners .

At the Creation of the World , *Time* got the start of us , and was five days elder then we : but our Immortal Souls shall indure beyond the utmost limits of Time , and last as long as the Everlasting Father of Spirits , of whose duration there is no end . Shall I then exist and live , tho my Body perish and see corruption ? Shall my soul , my self exist beyond the Grave , in Felicity or Misery , and that for ever and according to my present Actions ? what am I then most concerned to mind ?
what

what am I to choose? What am I
most to fear, to wish, to do?
What is a shadow of honor and
reputation among dying men?
What are a few drops of fleshly
Pleasure for a moment, to eter-
nal Rivers of Pleasure, at God's
right hand? What are the suf-
ferings of an hour or two, to the
pains and anguish of Eternity?
What can the World, Flesh, or
Devil give me, comparable to
Eternal Life? What can I suffer
in the way of Holiness, that may
be set in the balance against an
Everlasting Hell? And yet how
often, o my soul! how boldly,
how unconcernedly, how foo-
lishly, do I hazard the one, and
forfeit the other, for the sins and
vanities of this world! Whereas
one prospect of *Eternity* should
make every thing that is Temporal
appear little in my eyes: the
highest elevation of earthly

Greatness, abundance of Riches the great Affaires, Business, and Imployments of the World, Pomp, and Splendor, and Reputation, and all that now flatters the senses, and the vanity of Mankind.

Oh that I could but live as believing and expecting an *Eternal State*! as having it in my Eye, managing all my affaires with a visible reference to it: discovering to all the world by my Behaviour and Deportment, that I doe in earnest believe it certaine? for be it never so *Certaine*, if I do not apprehend, and consider it as such, it will no more affect me then a Fable. Neither is it enough to consider it as certaine, but as *Near*: for the most weighty, the most terrible things, apprehended as at a great distance, will little move. Thinking of the long Interval between, the advantage of
being

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being exempted from such evils for so long a time, will please me more, then such distant Calamities will affright.

Let me therefore endeavor to impress the consideration of *Eternity* at hand, more deeply on my heart: that I may walk, and live, discours, and pray, and demean my self in every thing, as near an unchangeable State. Am I not convinc't that this is Certaine, from the nature and operations of my soul, from the reflexions of Conscience, from the Righteousness of God, in his Government of the world, from the present unequal Distributions of Good and Evill by his Providence, and from the plaine and frequent assertions of his Revealed Will? I have nothing to object, nothing to reply; but I find a necessity of inculcating and urging the consideration of it. in
or-

order to its influence. I find it needfull to reflect often, how near I am to such an Endless State: that in one Instant, by Death, I enter upon it: and that this instant may be as near me, as my next Thought. That the H. Scripture describes the two contrary Conditions after death, (and every man and woman in the world shall share in one of them) as both Everlasting: the one, by *Eternal Life, Eternal Glory, an incorruptible Crown, that fadeth not away, an incorruptible Inheritance, an House Eternal in the Heavens, &c.* the other, by *unquenchable Fire, a Prison whence no escape, Eternal Damnation, Everlasting Burning, everlasting Punishment, everlasting Destruction, a worm that never dies, wrath that is ever to come, blackness of darkness for ever, &c.*

Think,

Think, o my Soul! that in one of these two contrary States, I must abide for ever. In endless Joy, or sorrow: Blessed in the presence of God, or forever banisht from it. And who ever thou art that' readest this, apply it seriously to thy self, 'tis thine own case. Yea I tell the from God, that Holiness of Heart and Life is absolutely necessary to the former, and that without it thou shalt never see his face, but be punished with Everlasting Destruction from the presence of his Glory.

Is this an unquestionable Truth? O let me consider it, till I feel the power and efficacy of so important a Principle! let the impression be deep and lasting! let it peirce and enter into my very soul! to cool the heats of lust, to quench sensual and earthly desires, and to mortifie all inordinate

nate affections to this world; and fix my resolutions to mind and seek Eternal Life with all my Heart!

These are not difficult and perplexed Niceties, which wise and holy men differ and disagree about. They are not metaphysical Subtleties, which few can understand; but the express word of *God*, and the dayly dictates of my own Reason and Conscience: which all Christians, and almost all men, in their wits, except in an hour of great Temptation, confess and own; or whither they will or no, are forc't to expect and Fear, if they are not in a condition, to consider them with a joyfull Hope.

Lord! cure the unbelieving doubts concerning these Great things, which notwithstanding the plainest Evidence, the Devil may at any time suggest! let a confirmed

firmed *Faith*, be the *Reality* of what is thus future, that my soul may be influenc't by them, as it is wont to be by things present! Let it be the *Substance* of things hoped for: and the *Evidence* of things unseen, and as yet at a distance: as if the Day of Judgment were already come, and there were no intermediate Time to passe between this and that.

O *Eternity*! *Eternity*! the more I consider it, the more unfathomable still I find it. Unchangeable Blessedness, or remediless Endless Torments! An Eternal blisfull Day, or Everlasting Horror, Darknels, and Despair! Life or Death, Glory or Deltruction, to last as long as the Immutable Living God! None of the Patriarchs who lived longest arrived to the period of *a Thousand years*, which in comparaisn of God's Everlastingness is set forth
but

but *as one day*. But strictly considered, millions of years and ages have no proportion with it; because no multiplication of them will amount to *Eternity*.

- Whereas one hour hath some proportion to an hundred thousand years, because a certaine number of hours will amount to so many years. But no number of years or Ages, never so often multiplied, will make up Eternity: as no subtraction of Millions of years will lessen it: an intire Eternity will be still to come, and will ever be to come. When innumerable myriads of years are past, Eternity shall then seem but to begin; because when as many more are over, it shall be as far from an end. Oh that the Thoughts of Eternity may be powerfull and prevailing above all others! that I may Judge of every thing by its relation to it, by its
in-

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influence upon it! Chuse now, o my soul! whither Everlasting Joys, or Miseries, shall be my Portion: but consider well, that thine *Eternity* is concerned in thy present choice: and that this choice must be pursued with stedfastness and Constancy, as long as I live: and what are a few years to prepare for an Eternal State: were we obliged to spend several hundred years in serious humble preparation for it, with the greatest strictness and severity of Life; during all that Time; it were infinitely less then to spend an hour or two, in preparing for the greatest Dignity and Employ on Earth, which can be enjoyed but for a few years at longest. For to these an hour hath some proportion; but an hundred or thousand years have none, with an Everlasting Duration. Therefore to consider how many years of toyl,
and

and pains, and diligence, many bestow on the probable prospect of some Temporal Good: should reprove and shame my negligence and remissness in providing for Eternity!

XIX.

The Punishments of the Damned considered, as intolerable, and Everlasting, and as unquestionably certain. What the Reflexion upon Hell-Torments, may and ought to teach us.

THE Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom, the entrance into the way of Life, as it is ordinarily one of the first means to awaken the soul to a serious concern for Eternity? let me therefore first consider the Endless Punishment of the wicked, in the other world, before I enter

enter upon the Ravishing Prospect of the Blessedness of Heaven, promised to the Righteous. And with what serious trembling should I think of the Terrors of *Everlasting Destruction, which our Lord shall be revealed from Heaven to render, to All who know not God, and obey not the Gospel.* When the wicked shall goe away into *Everlasting Punishment*; as the righteous into Life Eternal. The *Dreadfulness* of that Punishment, the endless *Duration* of it, joyn'd to the consideration of its unquestionable *Certainty*, deserves the most attentive Thoughts of every man, who loves his soul, and would manifest he doth so, by securing his greatest Interest.

The description of that misery, under insupportable and Eternal Torments, demands more than a transient view: because no
words

words can sufficiently express the Horror of that State. What is it, o my soul! to be banisht from the Blessed Sight and Presence of God for ever, and all the Impressions of his holy Image and likenels? and to know that this is the fruit of my own choice, that I lost it by my own Fault and Folly; that I deserved to lose it; that the sentence is as Just, as it is irrevocable? Who can fully imagine the dismal Despair of a condemned Sinner, under this anguish of a Guilty self-accusing Mind? while under the stroke of God's Almighty revenging Justice; with a distincter view and knowledge, then now, of God and his Excellencies, of himself, and his own vileness and malignity, which must greatly increas his rage and Torment: add to this, his being intraged by the accusations and cries of wicked Acquain-

quaintance, and Relations: and his being mockt, and insulted over, and tortured, by malicious damned Spirits; with a clear understanding of that glorious Felicity he despised, refused, and forfeited; with a deep sense of his former Madness in preferring the sinfull Pleasures and Advantages of this world: and this after so many warnings, and invitations, and calls from God, to have preyented it; never to be diverted one moment from the consideration, sense and feeling of his misery, and the duration of it; to have all his Passions let loose with the greatest violence and nothing to satisfy them; and continually to preserve an Hell of wickedness and Horror in himself; and to indure the reproaches convictions, regrets, & stinging Reflexions of Conscience, *the Gnawing worm, which shall never*
G dye?

dye? who can conceive the unspeakable misery of such an accursed State? So great Calamity, & yet *Everlasting!* How long doth one Day or Night now seem, to a man, under some violent racking Paine, in any one part of his body, tho he be under the means for cure, and have his friends about him to pity, comfort, and assist him, with the hopes of ease in a little while, and the certaine knowledg that it cannot last long? Oh what then will be the dismal state of tormented sinners in *Hell!* how infinitely must it exceed the most Terrible Idea we can now frame of it! to languish out a long Eternity in that Gulph of Darkness and Despair, under unpitied intolerable Torments, without Intermission, or hope of End! Miseries without measure! Judgment without Mercy! Pains and sorrows intense, and yet Endless!

*Vide Mr.
Baxters
Saints Rest.
part. 2.
chap. 4.*

less! without the least succour or relief, relaxation or remedy, diminution or change! without a drop of Comfort, without a moments Rest, without the smallest beam of Light, or the least glimmering of Hope! Perpetually dying, and never dead! under unsufferable Wrath, which yet will be for ever *Wrath to come!* seeking Death, and never able to find it, but Eternally to indure all that Calamity, which the Conjunction of Death and Life together can render dreadfull! what Groans and Cries will these Thoughts, and these sufferings wring from their Hearts? But no Refuge will then be found, no excuses admitted, no prayers, no intreaties will then prevail, no Tears move pitty. *He that made them will show them no mercy, and he that formed them will show them no favor.* When once deli-

vered over to that prison of God's wrath, they shall no longer be prisoners of Hope. Judgment shall be brought forth unto final victory: and the Redemption of the soul shall cease for ever.

Might we but suppose, that one of those Miserable Souls in the place of Torment did let fall but one Tear, in an hundred thousand years; and if after he had by this means wept so much, as that his Tears would equall the drops of water in the whole Sea, his Misery should have an end; this were *Hope*, this were *Comfort*. But alas! after that period, his Misery will be as far from an end, as when he first began to feel it. It will then be but *the Beginning of sorrows*, which will *never, never, never* End.

Think, o my Soul, that this is the Portion of the Sinners Cup: this is the wages of Sin: and the certaine doom of final Impenitence

tence and unbelief. 'Tis no politick Cheat, or melancholy dream, but the exprefs repeated word of God, and Chrift, the holy Prophets, and Apostles. and the voice of Reason too, supposing but the Immortality of the soul, and the power of self-Reflection: the punishment of Sinners must needs be Everlasting, as carrying continually an Hell within them, unless God work a miracle to prevent it, which there is no ground to imagine he will, or shadow of reason why he should. God hath pawn'd his Truth, and his Eternity, to execute this sentence of his threatned wrath. He is a God of infinite mercy, 'tis true, but he hath told us how far his Mercy shall extend. He will not exercise one Attribute to the dishonor and the disparagement of the rest. That obstinate and impenitent

Dent. 32. 40, 41.

Sinners, shall thus perish, is not because the Goodness and mercy of God are not infinite, but because his other Perfections are so, viz. His Holiness, Justice, Truth, Sovereignty, and wisdom. Was it wisdom and goodness to annex such a penalty to the violation of his law, and can it be inconsistent with them, to inflict his threatned wrath? Shall we suppose God to uphold his dominion and government by a Falshood? to keep the world in awe by the menaces of such Punishments, as shall nowhere, never be executed? Is it unlikely, that God should exercise so much severity? and is it not as improbable, that his repeated word & Oath should prove fals? Is it not a righteous thing with God, as the Governor of the World, thus to punish the obstinate Despisers of his Grace? who slighted his Authority, disobeyed his Law, affronted

affronted his Sovereignty, derided his Power, denied his Truth, contradicted his Holiness, and joyn'd issue with the Devill, to pull him from his throne; who abused his Patience and Long suffering, and scorned all his threatenings; who thrust away their own Happiness, and would not take warning; who burst all his bands asunder, and broke thro all obstructions, and would not be stopt in their course of vanity and folly, or so much as consider their danger; who rejected his calls to Repentance, and refused his mercy, when it was offered; and prefer'd a Lust before his favor, and the pleasures and profits of this world before the Heavenly Glory; and notwithstanding all the methods of his Grace, and the checks of his Providence, and of their own Conscience, they would goe on, they would

Dye? Let me, o my soul! adore the *Soueraign Justice* of God in all his Judgments; and tremble at the threatnings of that Eternal Wrath, which so few consider or believe, till 'tis too late. Let the foresight and the fear of such an intolerable endless Punishment, be a means to save me from it! let me hercin read the Evill of sin, and learn to abhor and avoid it. Let me pitty, and warn, and counsel, and pray for those of my Relations and Acquaintance, who live in sin, and run the hazard of this Eternal Ruine. Let me not envy the foolish Mirth, and momentany Prosperity of the wicked, whose present Joy must ere long expire, and an Everlasting Destruction succeed in its room. *How short is the Joy of the Hypocrite, and the Triumph of the wicked is but for a moment.* Let me fear and dread every thing,

Joh. 20.
6. 4. 5.

thing, that leads to this dismal issue: and improve every thing that may help me to escape it. And by consequence, let me less value all the Good and Evil of this present Life: judge of all things by this light: be patient under Temporal Calamities, and thank God that it is not *Hell*: and thank him more, that present sufferings do help to save me from Eternal ones.

Did I believingly consider *an Everlasting Hell*, I should not think much of any thing that is required to prevent it, the severest exercises of Religion, the strictest Temperance, the nicest Chastity, the largest Charity, the greatest selfdenial, all the Hardships of Repentance and mortification, and continuance therein to the death, tho for many years more then I am like to live, would be reckon'd *Easy*, as well

*Qui non
expergiscim-
tur ad hac
Tonitrua,
jam non
dormit, sed
mortuus
est.
S. Augu-
stin.*

as Just, if set in the balance against the Eternal Mischiefs of the Damned.

What will not men do, & suffer to prevent a Temporal Death? They will endure a painfull course of Physick; tear out their very bowells, by purges and vomits: and are content to be cut and scarified, and to suffer any thing almost to save their lives: but how little will they do, to be saved from the wrath to come! One would think, they should have no Rest, or Peace, or be able to live a quiet hour, till they had made some Provision against the hazard of this Eternal Destruction: and look upon all men as their Friends, or Enemies, according to the help, or hindrance, they received from them, in reference to it. But the direct Contrary is every where apparent. Men are careless and secure,

cure, jovial and merry, in the way that leads to Hell, and esteem, and love, and choose that Company, that will help to bring them to this place of torment. Yea such is their stupidity, and strange Perverseness; that they will not suffer to be told of their danger. If you tell them, that by such a course, or such an Action, they will lose so much money, or their lives will be in danger, they reckon it an obligation, will take it kindly, and return you thanks. But when they are told by such Courses and Actions, they will lose their souls, & the favor of God, & the hopes of Heaven, and must perish forever; this they will not receive, they despise the message, and scorn and hate the Messenger; are displeased and angry at such Faithfulness.

O Bless the Lord, o my Soul!

G 6

for

for any good hope, thro Grace of escaping this Intolerable and Endless Misery. *And let all that is within me, bless his holy Name.* And let me heartily compassionate the delusion of those multitudes of deceived, perishing Souls, whose Eyes are blinded by the God of this world; who will not believe it, till they are convinc't by the Light of that Fire which shall never be extinguisht. • Yea when I read or hear of ten or twenty thousand men slain in a War, (whither of Infidels, or Christians,) let me think of it, with other apprehensions then formerly I was wont to doe. Considering that many, it may be the most, of these shall never have any Comfort or Mercy more: fearing least the same sword or Bullet, that gave them their mortal wound, hath fixt them under God's Everlasting

lasting Wrath: and that by dying, they are undone for ever. In very many other cases, the Faith of this Article would rectifie my opinions, and direct my Actions; if seriously considered, and improved. This would make me think of *Death*, under another Notion, then 'tis commonly considered. For without the consideration of *Hell* annexed to it, it is not so very formidable, but that Heathen have been able to despise it. The most contrary Sects among them, on different grounds have been able to do it: but consider *Death*, as a passage to Eternal misery, as the Gate of *Hell*, as the End of all Comfort to a wicked Man, and the Beginning of an Endless Calamity, and nothing can be imagined more dreadfull to a Guilty unholy Soul. Some of my Acquaintance, it may be, who dyed this last

year, are now among those Hopeless Despairing Wretches, who expect the final Judgment of God, to consummate their insupportable Misery. If they were permitted to come, and tell us, what they suffer, and what they know; what a terrible consuming Fire God is; what Vanity, Lust, and Folly brought them to this place of Torment; what diligence they would advise us to, while in a state of Hope, to prevent the like; if we have any love and kindness for our selves, any bowels of Compassion to our own Souls; what a change do we think it would work upon us? But if we will not hear Moses and the Prophets, Christ, and his Apostles, neither should we believe, tho one came from the Dead.

The

XX.

*The Eternal Blessedness of
HEAVEN considered, as
the Perfection of Holiness: to
quicken our desires and endea-
vors after greater Meetness to
possess it.*

DOth one year after another
hasten me to the end of Ti-
me? and doth the Blessedness of
Eternity depend, on the Com-
munications I now receive from
God? on the preparations I now
make, and the meetness I can
now attain for Eternal Felicity
in the presence of my God and
Saviour? O with what Intense-
ness of mind, should I now pro-
secute that glorious object! with
what unwearied diligence should
I run the race that is set before
me? Least I fall short of the In-
cor-

corruptible Crown of Life? how should every thing be undervalued, and rejected, that would divert, retard, or hinder me from pursuing this end? Lord! be not a stranger to my soul in this distant Wilderness state! Let me see more of thy light! be transform'd more into thine Image! experience more of thy Love! feel more of thy vital Presence, and quickening Spirit! let the divine life in my soul be more powerfull! and the characters of thy Likeness be more legibly stamp'd upon it! by the dayly exercise of Faith, and Hope, and holy Affections, carry me thro this World! till my Pilgrim state be over, and thou hast brought me to perfect Everlasting Holiness! And let the believing forethoughts of it, fill all the powers of my soul, with Joy, and wonder, Desire, and Love!

Give

Give me, Lord! to think a-
right of the Heavenly Glory: as
a confirmed State of positive per-
fect holiness; of heavenly Light,
Love, Liberty, and Joy: with
the satisfying vision of God, in
the face of Christ, and his im-
pressed Likeness: dwelling for-
ever in the direct and steady view
of his transforming Glory: with
compleat conformity of the soul,
to Eternal Goodness, Truth,
and Love, as its perfection:
esteeming nothing, desiring no-
thing but that God and Christ
may be glorified with an intire
subjection to his will, adherence
to him, Rest and Confidence in
him: swallowed up in the love,
admiration, and praise of God,
and our Lord Jesus: living in joy-
full repeated Acts of Subjection,
Adoration, and acknowledg'd
Dependance: ravisht to behold
the Glory of God, in the Face
of

of Christ? see his blessed Image perfect in every one of the Saints, &c. When all the present Blindness of our minds, the errors of our Judgment, the Perverseness of our Will, the disorder and rebellion of our Passions, the remaining Aversion from God, and disaffection to him, which in this world we complain of, shall all be done away. The Flesh shall no more lust against the Spirit; or the Law in our Members against the Law of our Minds, but an Everlasting Tranquillity and holy Peace take place: a Peace, which passeth all understanding; without any outward Molestation, or inward cause of disquiet.

Our corrupted Nature shall no more cast forth mire and dirt as now: we shall have no more vaine or wicked Thoughts; no more sinfull Fears, or foolish Hopes;
un-

unbecoming Heats, unruly Desires, sensual Inclinations, Earthly Affections, feeble, slothfull, Spiritless Duties, dead and heartless Prayers cold Thanks givings, &c. but as we shall then know God without Error, and see our Lord Jesus face to face, so we shall love him without reserve, more then now we can think; and serve him without dullness and distraction; and praise him without weariness; the spiritual actings of our souls shall have no allay of drossie. And thus shall we be with him, and admire and injoy him, without end.

Thus when *Death is swallowed up in victory*, and what was imperfect is done away, and what was corruptible and mortal hath put on Immortality; *God in Christ shall be All in All*, And when it is truly and perfectly so, *Then it is Heaven.* A Word, tho commonly

monly used, as little understood, as *Holiness*; which is one of the greatest Mysteries in the World. But will hereafter be fully and delightfully understood, by the Blessed Saints: as the Malignity, and intrinsick Evil, of Sin shall be, by the Damned Spirits.

Oh that I might now feel more of this Heavenly Life begun, and carried on in my soul, by a farther participation of his holy Image, and conformity to his will! by more vital effects of his indwelling Spirit, in my soul, forming it to be a Temple to himself, for his own delightfull residence! that forgetting that, which I have received, I may still be Covetous and desirous of more: forgetting what I have attain'd, I may press on with an holy Eagerness and Fervency towards the mark!

When I seriously examine my
own

own heart, had I nothing els to prove the weakness of my Grace, & the sinfull remainders of unbelief, but the low desires, and few comfortable Thoughts, the seldom joyfull prospect of this Blessed State, how sad an Evidence were it? that I breath with no more Impatience, after that Blessed holy Rest, in the injoyment of God and Christ; and labor no more in preparing for it? when all the Desires of our Souls shall be fix't on Him, and filled with him, as our Infinite and supreme Good: and all the Expectations of Faith and Hope, swallowed up in endless admiration, gratitude, and Joy: being fully satisfied and at Rest, in the Presence and vision of God; without the least Inclination or Desire of change. And by consequence,

There will be no need of *Novelty*, as now, to give a relish to
our

our Happiness. All Happiness in this world is by comparing a man's present Condition, with his past, or with that of some Inferiors. But the Intrinsick Good, Felicity, and Joy of Heaven, will need no such foile to set it off; no such comparison to make it prized. The Blessed Spirits will never lose the lively sense of that low and miserable Condition, from which they were raised to so great a Glory: and so will ever equally rejoyce in the Happiness of their Translation and wonderfull change. And what was at first delightfull, will for ever be so; and not be disdain'd or lessen'd by a continuance: as it happens in this world, from the Emptiness, shallowness, and vanity of the Creature. An Affectation of variety, and desire of change, proceeding allways from a sense of want. But Holy Souls shall never be

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be weary of seeing, loving, and enjoying God; his blessed presence will afford us undecaying, and endless satisfaction: Pleasures, never to be interrupted, or abated, and never to cease. The blessed object is absolutely Infinite, and so will be allways *new* to a finite understanding, and continual fresh Communications from his infinite fullness, must needs make our subjective Happiness to be allways *new*, & Eternally So.

Let me by such Thoughts quicken and excite my diligent endeavors, after a greater meetness to enjoy so Great a Bliss. And to that end consider whither any of those happy souls, who have finisht their course, and obtained the Prize, do now regret their utmost diligence, patience. and perseverance, during their short abode here, to secure the
Bles-

Blessedness of an Endless Life,
No, no, they are far from re-
penting the Time they spent, the
trouble they were at, the care
they used, the difficulties they
met with, the sufferings they in-
dured: to conflict with the world,
and the flesh, to resist temptation,
to watch over their Hearts, and
words, and ways, to work out
their Salvation, to please God,
and be faithfull to him, &c.
They find to their unspeakable
comfort, and Everlasting Joy, that
Heaven makes amends for all
they could do or suffer in order to
their coming thither. Yea they
find, that they were not diligent,
and humble, and patient, and
circumspect enough. That they
did not love God, and seek his
glory, redeem their Time, and
improve all their Talents and op-
portunities of doing and recei-
ving good, and give up them-
selves

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selves intirely to prepare for Heaven, to that degree, they should have done. They find, by the transcendency of the Blessed Recompence, that it deserved infinitely more than the most active zealous Christian upon earth did ever do, in order to it.

Lord! quicken my Resolutions and Endeavors, by such thoughts as these? inspire my sluggish carnal Heart, with holy Light, and Life, and Zeal, and fervor! that *looking to the things, which are not seen, which are Eternal*, I may lay up a good Foundation, *against the Time to come, and so lay hold of Eternal Life!* 1 Tim. 6.
c. 19.

But alas! how much have I neglected the great Duty of Holy meditation? how little skill and experience have I in it, how tasteless and insipid oftentimes are my
H Thoughts

Thoughts of God! how confused and unsteady! how little Pleasure or advantage have I by contemplating his Highest Excellencies? Yet methinks, could I but retain the same awakened lively thoughts of Heaven, and Eternal Life, which sometimes I have had; might I continually feel the sweet and sacred Influence as for a little season I have sometimes felt it; how little, how very a Nothing, would all *this world* be to me! how comparatively weak, its strongest and most alluring snares, to draw me off from God! with what an unshaken mind could I refuse and resist'em! with what an unconcerned indifference could I look upon all its most charming Glory!

Could I maintaine such a frame of Spirit, as I have sometimes had for a little while; in the serious

rious contemplation of divine mysteries, in fervent Prayer, and other solemn duties of Religion; when the acts of Faith were strong and lively, my heart set on fire with love to God, and holy breathings after him, admiring his matchless Grace to fallen Sinners; (and to my Soul in particular:) when he brought me to the very suburbs of Heaven, (tho alas! how seldom,) by the delightfull Thought of what the Blessed Spirits above injoy; in being where Christ is, and beholding his Glory: when I was ready to say within my self, *"Tis good to be Here: this is no other then the gate of Heaven; Oh when shall Mortality be swallowed up of Life!* But when I thought at any time to fix and settle in such sweet Contemplations, how quickly did my lazy backward

Heart flye off! how soon did the flame decay, and dye away! how soon did I find my self fallen down to Earth againe! sunk down from the bosome of my Lord, presently forgot my self, and Heaven, to dwell among the Pots, and imbrace a dunghill! 'Twas not on my own wings, o Lord! that I soared so high; but I hope, by the breathings of that H. Spirit of Light and Love, who bloweth when, and where, and how long he listeth. Who gave me at any time any such *first fruits of the Spirit*; who convinc't me of the Certainty of the Heavenly Inheritance, by a lively believing foresight of it; who made me earnestly desire the wings of a Dove to be gone, and appear before God in Sion; made me pant, and groan to be delivered, and to be with God, and Christ, with
in-

inexpressible desire and joy, unconceivably mixt together with sighs and Groans. O my God! let not this experience be only such a Taste of the Powers of the world to come, as is consistent with final Apostacy! only the seeming zeal of the stony ground! the rapturous Joy of an hypocrite! from the power of Imagination, and an heated Fancy; from the workings of meer natural self love; upon mistaken apprehensions of God, and a fals Opinion of Heaven! but by the holy effects, let me be assured of the cause and Principle; that it was of God!

Teach me from the sweetness of a Spiritual Communion with God now in any of his apointed Ordinances, to argue to my self what that most ravishing satisfaction will be, that the En-

joyment of God in Heaven will afford the soul. Our Holiness is now imperfect, to what it shall be : and therefore our Consolation, Peace, and Joy, is but in part, and incomparably less then we are assured it will be, when we shall be admitted to behold the Glory of the Lord. 'Tis now at most but as the Break of Day, to the lustre of the Meridian Sun. But if in this low imperfect State, we can sometimes obtaine so near a view of his Glory, and feel such sweet communications of his Grace; how much more of this consolation and Joy is reserved to Heaven? If in this Pilgrimage, the gifts and graces, and comforts of the H. Spirit are so refreshing; O what hath God prepared beyond the Grave, for those who love him! If now he sometimes shed abroad his love in
our

our Hearts, after such a manner ; how much better shall I love him, and feel the influence, and evidence of his Love to me, when I shall be with him, and see him face to face ? If the apprehensions of this future Blessedness, do now encourage, raise, and animate my drooping soul ; O what shall I know, and see, and how shall I rejoyce, when the vail is removed ! If a Sacramental Communion with God and J. Christ be sometimes so sweet, and so affecting ; what will the Blessed Communion with God, and all his Saints above amount to ! when I shall sit down with all the Children of God, in the Presence of the Bridegroom, at the last Great Supper of the Lamb in Glory ! If the earnest of our Inheritance be so reviving, what will be the full Possession of it ! If the Hopes of that

glorious day, by holy meditation; be so transporting; what will be the end of our Faith and Hope? If a Grape or two in the Wilderness, be such a cordiall; what will be the whole vintage in the Land of Promise!

Shall I after all this forget my own Experience, and run from God and Heaven, to imbrace or seek a perishing Toy? Shall I hide myself, with *Saul*, among the stuff, and lumber of this world, when God is calling me to a Glorious Crown? Art thou, o my Soul! a Kings Son, an Heir of Heaven, an expectant of such Great Felicity; and yet stoop so low? Hope for Heaven; and yet grasp this Earth, and hugg the vaine Appearances of Earthly Good? Hope to be *like to God*: (and oh how Glorious an Hope
is

is that!) to partake of his Image, and live Eternally with him; and yet be solicitous, anxious, and disquieted about Honor, and money, and a Temporal Interest? and mightily concerned about the momentary gratifications of the Flesh, and the Injoyments of this World? Art thou a Pilgrim, and Stranger here; and travelling home to the Heavenly Country, and yet Eager and passionate about Earthly Things? Should an Heart, that is set upon Heaven, (or may be so, and ought to be so,) should it burn with such kitchin, such common Fire? and neglect the unconceivable Riches, and Pleasures, and Immortal Honors of the other Life? and the dawnings of that Glory upon my soul, by the foretastes of it in this? Should I not live, as seeking such things? as expecting such a Glory? And are

careless and indifferent thoughts, sleepy heartless prayers, faint and weak endeavors, becoming in such a case? Shall I not mend my pace, and double my diligence in my preparatory work? When I can believingly foresee the Blessed Recompence; Wayting for that Everlasting Light of the Sun of Righteousnes, which no Eclipse shall ever darken or obscure; for that Eternal Glorious Day, which shall never be closed with an Evening. When I shall see the face of God, in Christ, and be like him, participate more of his image, rest in his love, and dwell for ever in the light of his Countenance: according to the Prayer and Promise of my Blessed Saviour. And ought not such a prospect to sweeten the Bitterness of all our intermediate sufferings? we are now oftentimes in heaviness, and sorrow; but Eternity will

will be enough for an interrupted Joy. When we shall exchange all our troubles for Everlasting Rest; our prisons for perfect liberty; our Poverty for the Riches of God; darkness for Light; discord for love; deformity for beauty, our weaknesſes, and present languishings, for strength and vigor; folly for wisdom; disgrace for Glory; sickness and paine for Eternal Ease and Health; the Animal for the Angelical Life; imperfection and pollution for consummate Holineſs; our Sighs, and Tears, and Sorrows, and complaints, for triumphant Everlasting Praise; our losses, affronts, disapointments, perplexities, fears, groans, and Death, for crowns and scepters, hymns and Hallelujahs, light, and life, and Bliss unutterable; and such great things, as are fit for us to hope, but too Great to be now

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par-

particularly understood and talk't of; while *we know but in part, and see thro a glass darkly*: yea it seems as if it were not lawfull to utter'em. 2 Cor. 12. 4. and now they can not be exprest, or fully known; for *Eye hath not seen, or ear heard, or can it enter into the Heart of man to conceive that prepared Glory.*

XXI.

A devout Meditation, upon the 73 Psalm 27. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.

WHat is there in Heaven or in Earth, o Lord! but Thy Prefence to be valued, loved, desired, chosen, sought, or delighted in? there is nothing in either world, desireable without Thee;

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Thee; nothing certainly above
Thee; nothing in Comparison
with Thee. In Thee alone I trust.
On Thee I depend. In Thee I re-
pose my confidence and hope.
From thee I expect all my felici-
ty, and Salvation. What ever I
can lose, yet with the continuance
of thy Favor, which is my Life,
I have still *Enough*. With that
I am Rich, and without it I am
poor and miserable. And if I
want the Love of God, all that
Heaven and Earth can give besi-
des will not make my Happy. In
Thee, therefore I would termi-
nate all my affections, all my de-
votions! There is nothing of
Heaven to be had on *Earth*, but
in thy favor, image, and love,
and the reviving Sense of it. And
all the Heaven I expect *hereaf-*
ter, 'tis in the more full and im-
mediate communications of
these, in thy blessed Presence. I

can desire nothing, upon *Earth*; I can enjoy nothing in *Heaven*, but *Thee*! both here and there, thou art, and shalt ever be my all sufficient satisfactory Portion, my *Everlasting All*! None els can be the Portion of my soul. Nothing els can fill up all its wants, answer all its cravings, be suited to all its capacities, appease and charm all its restless motions, and give complacence to all its Desires, and be the proper object of all its *Affections*.

What is there els can justly claime my *Love*? or pretend to my supreme Affection, in comparison with God? Thou art alone the proper center of it. Thine infinite and incomparable Excellencies, (who art *Love* it self,) deserve my choicest Love: and thy numberless mercies and Benefits challenge it, as a just debt: as a peice of Homage due
from

On Time and Eternity. 183

from All, and of special Gratitude also from me. Oh that I could love thee above all Things! who alone art worthy of all my Love! O that Divine Love might be the ruling Principle within me! to inspire all my Thoughts, to regulate all my desires, to set all the Powers of my soul on work! O that it might take the full possession of my Heart, and so animate and order all my Actions, to please him, whom my Soul Loveth! If as yet I cannot say with thine Apostle, *Lord! thou that knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* Yet I can say, *Lord, thou knowest, that I would love thee!* Thou hast provided for our Happiness, by that first and great command, of loving thee with all our hearts, and souls, and strength. But alas! how backward is my sluggish carnal Heart, to this delightfull
exer-

exercife? tho I have fo oft been told, that *God is Love*, and that *he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*. O shed abroad thy love into my Soul! that I may feel the vital power and influence of it, and live continually in the love of God, and that nothing may ever be able to separate me from it.

Whom have I in Heaven or Earth, to *Hope* in, but Thee? I expect more from Creatures, then they can or will perform: but God can do for me more abundantly, then I can ask or think: exceed my largest thoughts, outstrip my highest expectations. And no man was ever disappointed who made Thee his Hope. When I meet with crosses, and wrongs, unfaithfulness, contempt, hatred, and persecution from men; I need not wonder. I was never told by God, it would be otherwise.

wise here. Did I look for less from Creatures, and expect more from God: did I reckon this World to be a state of Trial, and not a place of Rest and Satisfaction: my Faith and my desires, would be stronger with respect to God, and Heaven; and temporal Calamities and disapointments - less afflictive and vexatious.

And what is there, o Lord! in Heaven, or in Earth, my soul can *desire* besides *Thee*? is there any thing desireable, but as it is thine, of thee, and from thee? and bears some impression of thine Excellence, or brings some intimation of thy Love? and what can I reasonably desire; what, that is worth desiring, or having, but thou art able to be, and do, and give?

In whom, or what, shall I *Rejoyce*? but in *Thee*, o Lord!
shall

shall I solace my self in transitory Goods, that slip between my fingers; and perish in the using? or relish carnal Joys, which pollute and debase the soul? when I may and ought to rejoyce in Thee at all Times, as the only Source of perfect Everlasting Joy. Let me then stirr up my drooping, desponding, unbelieving Heart, to rejoyce in God: who takes pleasure in the chearfull service and obedience of his children: who delighteth in those, who delight in him. Is not *Delighting in God*, a most essential vital part of Religion? should it not be my constant Frame? hath not God sufficiently provided, that it may be so? Can I say and believe, that God is the Portion of my Soul; that *he is my God*, and I hope to live with him for ever, and not *rejoyce*? or can I consider the grace of the New Covenant, the match-

*Vid. Mr.
Howe, of
Delighting
in God.*

matchless Love of Christ, and the precious promises of the Gospel, and not see reason to *rejoice*? yea doth my soul love God, and endeavor to please him. And is not the very act and exercise of holy Love, mixt with unspeakable sweetness.

Whom is there in Heaven, or in Earth, or Hell, that I ought to *Fear*, but *Thee*? who hast a negative voice in all the designs men and Devils; an hook in their nostrils; a bridle in their mouths; to make them fullfill thy pleasure, and in every thing accomplish thy Sovereign Decree.

Is there any Other, in whom I may repose my *Trust*, but in *Thee*, o Lord! the Rock of Ages? the might of thy Power, the unsearchableness of thy wisdom, the Righteousness of thy Nature, the stability of thy Truth, the riches of thy Grace, and the im-

immutability of thy promise, are a sure foundation, for my soul to trust to, and rely upon. Thy word stands firm for ever: and the *Truth* of thine ability, and readiness to *help* in every Time of need, *endures the same thro out all Generations.* At all times, and in all places, my soul may trust in thee, and find relief. And they who know thy name will do so: for *in the Lord Jehovah is Everlasting Kindness and Strength.* To answer all my doubts, to supply all my wants, to fill all my desires. May not God take it unkindly, that I trust him no more? And is it not a criminal unkindness? that I give him not the glory of all these Excellent Attributes, which are the grounds of Trust: by a constant steady intire dependance on him for all that I need.

I have none in Heaven but
Thee,

Thee, o Lord! as the object of my *Invocation and Worship*. Let other Christians have recourse to new Mediators, and call upon other Gods: I will make mention of thy name, and of thy Righteousness *only*. And ask of thee whatsoever I need, for the sake of thy *Christ*, my *only* adorable *Mediator*. Him thou hearest allway; with him thou art allways well pleased. I honour the *holy Angells*, as glorious Attendants about thy throne: and bless thee for them, as *Ministring Spirits*, for the good of thy Servants but I dare not invoke, or worship 'em, because they are *Fellow Servants*. On the same account I honour the memory of *Departed Saints*, but neither invoke them, or pay them religious worship. That Glory, thou wilt not give unto another. I have no *precept* in *H. Scripture* to direct, no *promise*
to

to encourage, no *Example* to authorize the invocation of any other but Thee; *in whom I believe*, and Trust. 10. Rom. 14.

Having such a God in *Heaven*, what can I need on *Earth*? His eyes behold me, his wing is over me, his hand can supply me, his Grace provide for me. I can *want nothing that is Good*: unless I should need somewhat, which God, the infinitely Blessed and Allsufficient God, cannot bestow. If thou art the Portion of my Soul; all mine *Enemies* cannot make me miserable: unless they can void Heaven of the presence of God, hinder his care, bind up his hand, or obstruct his Love. But tho my *Enemies* cannot, I fear my *Sins* may. *They* alone can separate between God, and my Soul. And considering the multitude and aggravations of them, and thine unspotted Holiness

ness and Justice ; I should have too much reason to fear and tremble, yea and utterly despair, if I had none in Heaven but Thee. But thy word assures me, that I have a Mediator there: a faithful and a compassionate High Priest, Jesus Christ the Righteous; whom thou hast exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give Repentance and Remission of Sins. Who lives for ever in Heaven, to make Intercession, till he hath brought me there, to behold his Glory, and partake of it.

That Glory, o Lord! thou hast reserved for Heaven: in this world we only desire, believe, and hope to enjoy it. Whom have I in Heaven? that is the place of Fruition. What can I desire upon Earth? This world is the place of Desires, as the other of full Injoyment: most of that which men call Injoyment in this Life,

Life, consists but in desire. Desire or *Luſt* is all that is in the wicked world. 1 *John*. 2. c. 13. the Riches of a Covetous worldling makes him desire more: and the great mystery of Intemperance is to create and increase desires: & Desires of another kind are the portion of good men in this world. O that I could breath after a state of perfect Fruition in Heaven with more importunate desires! *Who will give me to be in Heaven with Thee? On Earth I desire nothing.* So one version. Let me, O my Soul! think of *Heaven*, as such a place, or state of *blessed Injoyment*! speak of it, seek it, long for it, prepare for it, as *such*. And let *J. Christ*, who is *the desire of all Nations*, (thro whom all divine communications are made to fallen Sinners) be the great object of my present desires and love! Let me
de-

desire nothing but as in him; and for him! that believing his word, obeying his Law, adoring his person, imitating his Example, trusting his promise, constrained by his love, partaking of his Image, filled with his grace, and comforted by his Spirit; my meditations of him may be sweeter, and my love stronger, and I may have nothing more left to desire for myself, but that God who hath raised and exalted him, would keep alive my faith, and hope, and holy desires, till he hath made me meet to be with him; and after having guided me by his Grace, and Spirit, and counsellors, here on Earth, would receive me to his most blessed and Glorious Presence in Heaven. *Amen, Amen.*

XXII.

The Glorious Appearance of Christ to Judgment considered as Certain: the Terror, and Astonishment, Confusion, and Despair of the Wicked, to behold their Judge; and hear his condemning Sentence to EVERLASTING Destruction.

WHen our Blessed Saviour shall appear to judge the world, I read that it shall be, *in his own Glory, the Glory of his Father, and of the Holy Angels.* If by the *glory of his Father*, be meant that of the Divinity, as the Original and Author of all things in nature, as Creator of the World; and by the *Glory of his holy Angels*, be understood that of the Legal administration: the
Law

Law being given by the disposition of Angels: and by *his own Glory*, that of the Gospel, as he is the Messiah: that in the Glory of all these, he shall come to Judgment, we have a summary account of the three different Revelations. which God hath made of himself to mankind; by the Light of *Nature*, that of the *Law*, and the more manifest one of the *Gospel*. According to which every man is to be judged at the last day.

Tho we cannot distinctly tell what or how great our Lord's Glory will then be; we may be certaine, it will be suitable to the dignity of his Royal person: suitable to the grandeur of his Fathers Majesty: with the splendor of a Triumphant Prince, who is Heir of all Things, and hath all power in Heaven and in Earth committed to him, the Great

Lord of both Worlds, Head of Angels an men: and suitable to his glorious office, as Mediator, and the apointed Judge of Quick and Dead.

If at his Transfiguration his Face shone, and his Rayment was white and glittering, how much more splendid will his last Appearance be? When the Bodies of his Saints shall be seven times brighter then the lustre of the Sun? and if his Members shall then be so glorious, how transcendently more so will their Head, their Lord appear? If the delivery and promulgation of the Law, on Mount Sinai, was accompanied with such circumstances of terrible Majesty, how much more may we suppose the *Great Assize* will be attended with? When he comes to judge for the violation of the Law, and the contempt of the Gospel. And
if-

if even *Moses* did then exceedingly quake and fear, what will be the consternation and trembling of the wicked World at the Coming of Christ? *When he shall be revealed from Heaven, in flaming Fire*, with a glorious retinue of his mighty *Angels*, as so many bright Stars about the more glorious Sun of Righteousness. The lights of Heaven shall be Eclipsed: the visible Sun shall veil its blushing head as infinitely outshone: the present glory of the Creation be all benighted, by reason of his transcendent Brightness. Yea the Heavens shall be wrapt up as a scrol; the Elements melt away with a mighty noise; the Earth and all its works be burnt up; and the whole universe as one great Bonfire, to adorn the Triumph of our Lords Appearance. And this ushered in by the voice of an Archangel, proclaiming

I 3

claiming his approach: and the voice of God supplying the use of a Trumpet, to raise the Dead, and possess mankind with an awe-full Reverence of their Judge.

Thus in triumph, as a Conqueror and a Judge, shall he come againe, who once appear'd in the form of a Servant to be judged and condemn'd by Man. *Then* he was called *King* in scorn: *now* he will appear as much above all Earthly and Humane Greatness, as once he stoopt for our sakes beneath it. *Then* the Contempt of Nations, and no way esteem'd Desireable, when he came from the womb of his Virgin-Mother: *now* the Terror of the World, when he comes againe from the right hand of his Father. No more to be subject to a state of Meanes, but *to render vengeance to all, who know not God, and obey not the Gospell: and to be glorified*

*fied in his Saints, and admired in,
and by all them that believe.*

The Holy Scripture doth frequently and expressly assure us, that he will thus come againe, and for these ends. He is exalted, and gone to Heaven, as the Head of his Church, and the King of Glory, and when he foretold his Ascension, he gave a promise of his Return. The Heavens are to containe him till *the Restitution of all things*. By his Providence, and by the H. Spirit, he now carries on the designs of his Death: and when these are accomplisht, he will appear to the Joy of Believers, and the confusion of the Wicked. He is entred as our *Forerunner*, within Heb. 6.e. 19, 20. 10. c. 20. the vail, to prepare Mansions, and to take possession for us: and will not allways leave us in this dark and defiling World. He knoweth our sorrows, and heareth

our prayers, and bottles our Tears, takes notice of our groans, and in all our Afflictions he is afflicted. *Being reconciled by his Death*, at his first Coming, *we shall be saved by his Life*: since he lives to make good his word of coming againe.

How comfortable is the news of it? how joyfull will be the meeting, to such as expect and prepare to see him? When the Sea and the Graves shall yeild up their Dead; and all the *Prisoners of Hope* lift up their heads, arise goe up, and meet the Lord in the Air, and ascend with him to the Heavenly Glory. But who can expresse how dismal a Sight this will be to the secure and the Impenitent, to all who dye in their Sins? to behold their *Judge*, (who formerly offered to be their *Saviour*,) upon a glorious Throne, and all the Children of Adam
sum-

summon'd to his Tribunal! to have nothing to answer against his charge, and no way to escape his condemning sentence! they despised him as a *Lamb*, offer'd in Sacrifice, to take away the sins of the World: but shall no longer do so, when he comes as the *Lion* of the tribe of *Juda*, to devour and destroy the Enemies of his *Crosse*. Now, they will not own him for their *Lord*; but shall then find he is so, by the vengeance he will execute. As a *Jesus*, as a Saviour, they rejected him, making light of his Salvation, despising his Mercy, refusing his Grace; but the neglected Gospel will then be a more killing Letter than the Law. He who by his Ambassadors doth now intreat Sinners to be reconciled; will then be as deaf to their Intreaties, as they have been to his. Because they

would not turn at his Reproof
hearken to the call of his word
and obey its voice, they must
hear the sentence of Condemnation,
and feel the Execution of
it, wither they will or no. Yea
the blood of his Cross will up-
braid, accuse, and plead against
them. And what ever foolish
Evasions they now make, to con-
tinue in security, they shall then
be speechless and self-condemned.
Nothing will be able to hide
them from the amazing Presence
of their Judge, or from the
Wrath of the Lamb. Who will
inflict an intolerable and right-
eous vengeance, an *Everlasting*
Destruction, upon all the Ignorant
and ungodly World. The
Greatest, the Stoutest, the boldest
of them shall then be humbled,
and stand before Christ's Tribunal,
upon an equal Level with the
meanest; seized with horror,
filled

filled with Guilt, Anguish, and Despair: and find to their Eternal Confusion that *the Judge is no respecter of Persons, but every man shall receive according to his works.* The Mighty shall not be spared for his Greatness, nor the mean man for his Poverty. O Fool! o Wretch that I am, shall many then say, who now brave it out in Pride and vanity, unconcern'd about a future Judgment! not to be persuaded by the Terrors of the Lord, which I was so often warn'd and foretold of! what refuge of Hope can I now flye to? what can I say for my self? what can I doe to escape, to dye, to exist no longer? I would have no compassion on my own Soul; I would not so much as consider its Danger; I shall now find none from Christ, I can expect none! his Mercy is gone, and gone for ever! I am lost, undone

tormented, and must Eternally be so! O the amazement, Horror, and Despair of self condemned Sinners in that day of Vengeance!

O my Soul! what is there of greater Consequence, or of greater Certainty from the word of God, then that I must appear to Judgment, when Christ shall come againe? Lord, teach me to believe it firmly, to consider it often, to lay it seriously to Heart, to act under the influence and power of it, as long as I live; that at the Great Resurrection from the Dead, I may lift up my head, with a joyfull Hope, and find the Judge to be my Friend, my Advocate, my Jesus, and not my Enemy, and Destroyer.

Me-

XXIII.

*Meditations of the Glory of
Christ in his Glorified Saints,
and of the thankfull Admira-
tion of Believers, when He
shall come againe from Heaven,
which shall be continued to all
ETERNITY.*

THe Terror of our Lords
Appearance to Judgment
cannot be greater to the wicked,
then the comfort and Joy it will
be to the Saints. When they shall
see him whom their Souls love,
ascend with him to Heaven, and
be wellcom'd, according to his
promise, with those indearing
words, *Come the Blessed Children* Matt. 25.
,, of my Father, inherit the King-
,, dom prepared for you, from be-
,, fore the foundation of the world!
,, 'Twas for your sakes, I assumed
I 7 ,, flesh,

„flesh, lived on Earth, and dyed
„on the crosse, to purchase this
„Glorious Kingdom for you,
„which I now come to give you
„the Possession of. 'Twas for
„this I prayed, and suffered on
„Earth, for this I interceded
„ever since in Heaven: I was
„heard in that prayer, accepted
„in those sufferings, and my In-
„tercession granted, *that where*
„*I am you may be also, to behold*
„*my Glory. Come therefore Good*
„*and Faithfull Servants, enter*
„*into your Lords Joy.* O what
Ravishing words will thees be!
what an Extasy of Love and kind-
ness is implied in them? What
matter of Rejoycing may it now
give me, to admit the Hope,
that my Blessed Saviout will say
such words as these to me? and
bid me stand upon his Right
Hand, among his sheep? O what
an exulting frame of soul will
such

such Expressions raise! how shall all my doubts and fears and sorrows be scatter'd in a moment, and cease for ever! O Glorious Day! when my Blessed Lord shall thus publicly acknowledg me for his own, and plead my cause against all the accusations of Satan and the malicious Calumnies of all his Instruments! when I shall be able to say of all my Sins and sufferings, as my Lord upon the crosse, *It is Finished, It is Finished.* My warfare being accomplisht; being more then Conqueror over all, thro him, who loved me, and dyed for me, and now is come to wipe away all Tears from mine Eyes, as it were with the Napkin, that was bound about his Head, when laid in the Grave: all being the fruit of his Meritorious Death. Then shall I have nothing more to fear, or wish, or beg. I shall offend, provoke,

voke, and dishonour him no more; or by my folly and scandal discredit his holy name and Gospell. But by consummate Holiness be fitted to Rejoyce in his Presence Love, and celebrate his Praise for ever. I shall never more lament his Absence, or complaine of his Anger: never see a cloud on his Face, or a Frown in his look any more. Now I must wait and pray, struggle and strive, labor and suffer, desire and expect, believe and hope, &c. but then perfect Rest and Holiness, love and joy, vision and fruition, bliss and glory unutterable and everlasting shall take place.

All the Attributes of God, all the wonderfull Perfections of Christ will then be glorified in Believers, and admired by them. His invariable *Truth* will then be honoured, which they trusted to,
and

and waited for, for now they shall know and find they did not wait in vaine, they hoped in his word, and ventured their Salvation upon it, and now they shall receive the End of their Faith and Hope, infinitely beyond what they ever expected or believed.

The Glory of Divine Wisdom will then appear, when the Constitution Administration and design of the Mediators Kingdom shall be fully known: in the admirable order and beauty of every part of it, with the exact tendency of all the particulars to one Glorious end: and the whole undertaking crown'd with so blessed an issue. What is now a mystery even to Believers themselves, and hath a vail upon it, shall then no longer be so: all the riddles of Gods Grace and Providence be plainly understood. O how transporting a view must

must it needs be, when the Glory of all the divine Attributes which God intended to accomplish, in and by *Christ*, shall be manifest to his Redemed Saints. The whole method of our Salvation will then appear to be the fruit of unsearchable Wisdom. when we shall all see the reality and substance, and intire scheme, of all that God designed in and by him; all that was typified of him, and foretold concerning him, in the old Testament. How will it all appear to be *the Manifold Wisdom of God. Ephes. 3. c. 10.*

*Vid. Mr.
Charnock
of the Div.
Attrib.
Wisdom.*

As in uniting Heaven and Earth together in the Person of our Mediator: fullfilling the Truth of a terrible Threatning in his death, & by the same way accomplishing many gracious Promises: Satisfying Justice, and at the same time showing Mercy: manifesting infinite Grace and kindness by
shed-

shedding of blood: conquering Death by dying; and disarming the Law by obedience to it, &c. afterwards subduing the world to the Faith of the Gospel, by the foolishness of preaching: making men wise to Salvation by the knowledg of the Crosse: and spreading that Faith the more by all the opposition made against it, &c. how wonderfully will a clear view of these things discover, and glorifie the Wisdom of God.

But the *Love and Grace of Christ*; the infinite Goodness and Compassion of God, will then be magnified in an especial manner. What but Sovereaine Love in the whole Contrivance and Counsell of God about our Redemption? what admirable Love and Grace in the whole management of that design? what unparallel'd kindness in the accomplishment of it by the sacrifice of the son.

son of God? and how glorious will this Love appear, when he shall come againe to give us the full Harvett of all his Purchase? with what admiring Thankfullness shall Believers then contemplate the unskearchable Riches of his Grace? in all the parts and instances of his Humiliation, from his conception to his Crucifixion and Burial: in all the Evidences and discoveries made of it, from the first Promise to it's completion: yea from before the foundation of the World, in the Covenant of Peate between the Father and the son, untill his second Coming, to Judge the World, and deliver up the Kingdom to his Father.

How shall we then admire and adore his *Powerfull Grace*? which snatcht us as fire brands out of Everlasting Burnings; that effectually shin'd into our minds
by

by Heavenly Light; conquer'd the opposition of our Stubborn Wills; Sanctified our Carnal Hearts; rescued us from the tyranny of Satan, and the dominion of lust; giving, cherishing, and preserving the holy Seed of Grace, and making it Spring up to Eternal Life; defeating the malicious and subtle endeavors of the Devil to destroy it; inabling us to indure Tribulation, and persevere to the End; giving us victory over Death; conducting us thro the dark valley; raising our Bodies, reviving and reuniting them to our Souls, and rendering them glorious like his own Body; and at length raising our imperfect Services with. Eternal Life. yea tho our best services were mixt with sin, our holiest duties spotted, our most couragious sufferings mixt with unbelief, yet rewarded with a Bles-

Blessedness that hath no alloy of Evil, but all the ingredients of a perfect Felicity, and nothing to lessen and interrupt it. How shall we then admire the Bounty of our Gracious Lord, the freeness, tenderness, riches, and the exceeding Greatness, and Glory of his Infinite Goodness and Grace to poor Believers?

With what extasies of Joy and Gratitude may we imagine that our Lord will be then admired by all his Redeemed ones?

Saying, *This is He*, who made our peace with God, and reversed the Sentence of Damnation, which we were under: who bought us with the price of his most precious Blood, bore the Wrath of his Father, and submitted to an infamous and cursed Death for us: he assumed our nature, that we might partake of his: became the Son of Man, that we might be made

made the Children of God; for our sakes he became poor, that we thro his Poverty might become Rich: stoopt to bear the greatest Ignominy and reproach, to conferr honour on us: was for a time forsaken of his Father, that we might not be so Eternally: felt the stroke of his Anger against sin, that we might not perish under it. Was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, that we might rejoyce: his agonies and bloody sweat were for our Refreshment, and by his stripes we are healed: he bowed his head on the Crosse, that we might lift up ours in Triumph: and because we had eaten of the forbidden fruit, he hung on the accursed Tree. 'Twas *for us* that he suffered the frowns of Heaven, the enmity of Hell, the rage of Devils, the hatred and persecution of the world: He was
jud-

judged, that we might not come into Condemnation: he was crucified, that we might be glorified; and he is now Come againe finally and fully to effect it.

O the height, and depth, and length, and breath of the Love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, but calls for admiration, and Everlasting Gratitude! This is the *Blessed Day*, we long'd and waited, and prayed for! This is our *Gracious*, our *Glorious Lord*, whose love melted our Hearts, whose Promise was our Support, whose Word was our Rule, whose Spirit was our Comforter, whose Crosse was our Crown, and the hope of his Appearance our chief Consolation!

Lord! what am I, what was I, that the ever-Blessed Son of God should do and suffer and purchase all this for me? I can remember when I was ignorant of God, a
Stran-

Stranger to him, at Enmity with him, under the power of Darkness, and the Devil, serving divers lusts and Pleasures, hastening to Hell, and liable to his Wrath. But he chose me out of the world, stamp't his Image upon me, pardoned my Sin, and imbrac't me in the arms of his unchangeable Love. *O Happy Change!* and yet how little did I prize his Grace, admire his love, and express my own, or pomote his glory, and honour him in the Eyes of others? how did I dishonour my profession and holy Calling, as his Dilciple, by aggravated Apostacy? but he recovered me by Repentance, and healed my Backslidings, and received me graciously, because he loved me freely. *O admirable Grace!* to pardon, and save, and bring to Glory such an unthankfull Wretch, as I have been! to

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make

make such a difference between me and others, whom I knew on earth ! that the same Power, which makes them Miserable, now makes me Blessed ! that when they are banisht from his Presence into Everlasting Destruction, I am admitted to behold his Glory, and shall dwell with him for ever !

O how much more do I now see and find then ever I believed, of the Love of Christ, and his promised Salvation ! how much more glorious is the Person of my Redeemer ! how much more Excellent is the Heavenly State, then ever I thought or expected ! I could not have imagined the thousandth thousandth part of that which I now see and feel. I cannot but admire and spend an Eternity in admiring, and praising the Incomparable Grace and Glory of my Blessed Redeemer.

Such

Such holy admiration will certainly produce the most thankfull Adorations of our Lord Jesus. Saying one to another, *I Bless the Lord of Love and Glory!* who humbled himself so low, as our Mediator, and hath exalted us so high, as the blessed fruit of it! how can we ever enough adore and praise him, who condescended so far, and hath done and suffered so much for us? See how the Holy Angels worship this King of Glory! and have not every one of us more reason to do so? O let all the Quire of Heaven celebrate his glorious Love! and let us, his Redeemed, his Glorified ones say continually, *Let the Lord be magnified: who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own Bloud, and made us Kings and Priests unto God, his Father, and thro him ours.*

O Mercifull Saviour! O glo-

rious Change! O Happy Society! with whom we shall Eternally adore our Common Lord. We can some of us remember when we lived together on Earth, how we wept, and praid, and fasted, and mourned together, when we suffered, and complain'd, and sin'd together. O the Marvellous change our Redeemer hath now wrought for us, and in us! These Bodies, these Souls, this Life, this Place, this Company, these Injoyments, are not like those in yonder World. But alas, who can describe what Believers shall then think and say to extol their Saviour! how smal a portion is it we understand of that World? How little can I conceive, and much less exprefs? Blessed be God we know so much, as the matter of our joyfull Hopes: and forever Blessed be God, who hath promised and provided such
a Glory

a Glory for us, as cannot now be fully known.

What inexpressible sweetness might Believers tast by rejoycing in Hope, did a more lively Faith realize all this to their Souls? we might listen as it were to the shouts and Acclamations of the Saints above, and say *Amen* to their Thanksgivings. We might behold them about the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, with Palms of victory in their hands, a Crown of Glory on their heads, and songs of Triumph in their mouths, saying *Allelujah*;

Worthy art Thou, o Lord, to receive Rev. 4. c.
11. 5. c.
12. 13. *Glory, and Honour, and Power, for thou hast Created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created. And worthy is the Lamb that was slaine, to receive Power, and Riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and Blessing.*

sing. And againe, Blessing, Honour, Glory, and Power be unto him who sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Whence is it, o my Soul! if indeed I believe and expect all this, that I can hear, and read, and think, and speak of these great Things, with no more ardent affections, suitable preparations, importunate prayers, and vigorous desires? How should the believing Thoughts of that Day promote my Heavenly mindedness, self-denial, contempt of the world, patience, and perseverance? quicken my zeal, secure my steadfastness, and give life and spirit to my Prayers for the hastening of it? how should my soul rise towards Heaven, by holy Love and desire, ascend and meet him, get as near him as I can, breath after more of his presence,

sence, and beg him to prepossess my Heart, to anticipate his second Coming by clearer discoveries of his Love, and fuller communications of his Grace. *Even so Come Lord Jesus!*

XXIV.

Concerning the Examination of a mans Heart and Life: the Reasonableness, Advantages, and Necessity of it. Some direction and advice concerning the Time and manner. That we may know in what Preparedness we are for ETERNITY.

I Am hastening every year, every day, to the period of this Life: I must shortly appear before my Glorious Judge; and experience these Terrors or Comforts, this Blessedness or Misery, which I have now read of. Shall I

Not therefore inquire, which of the two belongs to me? Is it not worth considering, wither I must goe, and how I shall fare, when I quit this Body? what is like to be my next Habitation? to which of the two unchangeable States I shall be adjudg'd? Shall an Inquiry of so much consequence be put off to an indefinite Hereafter? do I not desire to know the worst, while a remedy may be found? or am I content to dye, thro an unwillingness to discover that I am Sick? The question to be resolved is of infinite weight. Shall I not spend a few hours to know what will become of me *for ever*? An error is more then possible, 't is easy to mistake: and the hazard of doing so is unspeakably great. How many thousands perish eternally, even under the light of the Gospel, who never suspected their danger? how or-
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dinary, how common a thing is it; for men to be thus deceived? how successfull is the Devill in this Stratagem against the Souls of men? Is it not then a most criminal stupidity, to be contentedly. Ignorant and unresolved? Wither I am reconciled to God or no: Wither I am led by the Flesh or the Spirit; wither I am in the broad or narrow way, which lead to such contrary Ends; that is, wither if I dye in this condition, I shall be *saved* or *perish*. Can such an Inquiry be frivolous, or indifferent? Is the subject of it so contemptible, and my concern in it so small, that it merits not to be attentively considered? Shall I never ask my soul, till I am leaving this world, (the unfittest Time of all to begin so important an affaire,) what am I? to whom do I belong? whose Image do I bear? how have I

liv'd? & what do I doe? what do I love most? what do I most constantly desire, and choose, and seek? how doth the Pulse of my soul beat? is it quickest towards God, or towards the world? wither am I going? what will be final upshot and issue of my present course? Is it Heaven or Hell I must be translated to by Dyeing? what Security have I got for Eternal Life? what provisions have I made? what foundation have I laid?

How strangely infatuated are most men, who talk of an Everlasting Life as an Article of their Creed; and say they count upon it, that they must dwell in Happiness or Misery for ever; and that seldom or never bethink themselves in good earnest, and for any Time, with a settled composed exercise of Thoughts, Which of these Two is like to be

be their Lot. Or If they begin to search and try themselves, they come to no Conclusion, or conclude too hastily: they pluck off the plaister, as soon as it begins to smart; they are either frightened with the horrid prospect of past Crimes, or, having escap't the grosser Pollutions of the world, judge too favourably of their own case. They commonly do the work but by halves, and so goe from the glass and forget what manner of persons they were.

Let me therefore, o my Soul: Sequester my self from the world, to commune with my own heart to reflect upon my past Life, and look in to my present state, to recollect and review the most considerable passages of my course and Time hitherto. O how neglected and disused a Practise is this! which doth challen-

ge and require our principal and most Serious concern about it, and how many begin it and are discouraged, and leave off without reaching the End of such an Enquiry.

How much wiser, in this respect, are the Children of this world, in their Generation, than the Children of Light? who is so Exact in his accounts between God and his own Soul, as Trades-men in their dealings with one another? who is at the pains to write down his Sins and his Mercies? the grounds of his Fear, and the encouragements of his Hope? or keeps a Journal and Diary of his Spiritual State? who doth at set times, once a moneth, or once a Quarter, or even once a year, take a just view of himself, his Heart, and Life, and State, as a Christian? that he may see what he hath received,

ved, and done; what he owes, and what he may expect: that he may know wither he thrive or decay; wither he increase or decrease, wither he goe backward or forward; wither he be Richer or Poorer, *this year* then the *last*: And is it not a symptom that you are declining, when you love not to examine your Accounts? Is there not ground of Jealousie and Suspicion, that you are behind hand, because you are loath to inquire, whither you are or no? and unwilling to know the worst of your Condition. Nevertheless, without Such Enquiries, and bringing the matter to a determination, at what uncertainties must we live? and how unconceivable an hazard do all Hypocrites and unrenewed Sinners run? and how reasonable, how necessary is it that we should know, and in order

to it, prove our selves? we must therefore bestow Time and serious Diligence about it, that we may examine matters to the bottom, and come to some Result, that we may form a right Judgment concerning our own case.

He that would do it to good purpose, must endeavor to understand clearly the terms of the Covenant on God's part, and on ours: and take care not to Judge of himself by, mistaken rules; by a false Standard, that God will not justifie; or by any, such characters as will not conclude. But most men are unwilling to bring themselves to a Trial, or let Conscience deal plainly and faithfully with them. They are stupidly secure, and see not the necessity of this duty. Or do not suspect themselves. They presume they need not be at that Trouble: or are so taken up with
the

the World, that they cannot find Time and leasure for it. And many men dare not bring their Hearts and ways to a Trial. There is commonly some seeret Lust indulg'd, which they are loath to let goe. But most goe on in sin, and perish Eternally, because they think there is no danger of perishing: and never repent, and make their Peace with God, because they fancy and presume tis done already.

Therefore let me beg of thee, who ever thou art, who readest this, to put the case to thy self seriously to admit the doubt, wither you are not mistaken; make the supposition, tho you have not hitherto sufficiently considered the State of your Soul. You are confident that *all is wel*; and therupon are unwilling to examine farther: but for that very reason you ought to
que-

question, whether it be so or not? do but ask yourself seriously, what is the ground of your good Opinion concerning your self? for what reason can you thus conclude?

Did you ever seriously lay to heart the Characters and description, which the Scriptures give, of those whom Christ will own, at the last day, and of such whom he will reject and reprobate? with unfeigned application to your own case, have you therewith prov'd your selves? and come to a settled Judgment, after a deliberate Enquiry? And was the Conclusion to your comfort, and Joy? If so, what influence hath it since had upon your Heart and Life? hath it promoted Purity, Thank fullness, Heavenly-mindedness: contempt of this world, and stronger Desires after the Image, love, and presence of God,

God, and the Glory of Christ?
Moreover, consider.

Is it not this a good while agoe? how have you behav'd yourself ever since? have you not reason to look back with shame? If you but slightly examin'd yourself formerly, resolve to do it more effectually now: review the sins you have been since Guilty of. And if you have not done any thing considerable of this kind, you ought now to begin. It is seasonable to begin the year by such an Exercise, and it will be found of great use, in all the following parts of it: especially when you come to examine your self afresh, in order to the Lord's Supper. For we ought frequently to renew the sad remembrance of our former Sins, that from time to time we may renew our Repentance, which is the work of our Life, and not
of

of one day. And he that comes to the Sacrament, and will look no farther back, then to the last Communion, may possibly presume too much, that all was then as it should be, and not be humble enough.

If any one therefore resolve in good earnest up on an holy Life, and seriously design to prepare for Eternity, as it is necessary to make a general review of his Life, so I desire to afford him the best Counsell I can, in order to it

*Vid. Mr.
Baxter's
Saints
Rest. p. 3.
chap. 7:8:9.*

It may be adviseable, if you have not formerly begun this work, to imploy one hour at least in a Day, for several Days following, in writing down the most considerable Passages of your Life you can remember, desiring God's Assistance therin; and keeping your Eye upon your End, in the whole; that is, thin-

thinking seriously that 'tis in order to Eternity, that you now examine your self. Choose a place of Retirement, and the most convenient Time, that you may not be interrupted, and when your Heart is most serious. Every man may divide his Life into several parts, as from Infancy till he left off going to school, or was bound Apprentice, or settled in any way of education. From thence 'till fixt in some Employment: til a married person, till entred into that Condition. And from thence to another remarkable Period, or to the present Time. It may better assist some persons memory, to consider the several Places of their abode, and compute according to them. In each portion of time, recollect what *sins* you were most addicted to: in what Instances, in with what Frequency, and

and with what other various aggravations you committed 'em: and what have been the effects and consequences of those sins, to your selves, and Others, in order to Repentance, and godly sorrow. Which must not be judg'd of by Tears, but Grief, and inward hatred of Sin. Remembring that no man is the better meerly for being examin'd, if there follows nothing after it. Tis in order to a Judgment to be pass'd upon our selves. Tis to search out *our own Iniquity*, our Beloved sin, in order to the mortification of it. That *Goliath* must first be Slaine, if ever the other Philistims are conquered. In some it is Pride, in others Worldliness, in some Uncleaness, in others Drunkenness Gluttony &c. That you may discover it, observe

What sin 'tis you are most unwilling-

willing to part with : which you could even wish were not for bidden.

Which you have formerly been most apt to plead for, extenuat or excuse, and hide.

The thoughts wherof do most frequently occur; especially when Alone : first in the morning, and last at night : and are most distracting in Prayer and worship.

Which an awaken'd Conscience hath most plainly told you of; under a Sermon, or at a Sacrament or under some heavy affliction, or on a sickbed &c.

Which you can least bear to be Reproov'd for.

Which the Temperament of your body doth most incline to.

Which your Calling, employment, Company, and converse, administer the greatest Temptations for.

That especially which hath the
Throne

Throne of the Heart, and sets all the faculties a work to contriue fuel and opportunities for its Gratification.

Observe likewise what *Paſſion* was most Predominant in each Period: or is yet so; and what ill effects it hath produced. Consider farther what dangerous *Temptations* you have met with: how you have fallen by 'em, or been inabled to resist. Consider withall the Time and the Means, wherby God hath at any time formerly awaken'd, convinc't and humbled you: what Purposes of Amendment, and Promises of Reformation you have ever made, and how far you have, or have not, perform'd 'em. Recollect likewise all the *ſpecial Mercies*, you have receiu'd from God, in every State and Period of your Life; in order to Thankfullness. The last section
of

of thes Papers may giue you some assistance therin, and consider what Retrun's you have made to God, for all his Kindnesses.

You may do well to consider your self also in the *Relations* you have stood to others; as Inferior Equal, or Superior: in family, Church, or State; in your Calling, profession employment, &c. And examine in what more notorious Instances, you have been faulty in your Relative Duties. How you did ordinarily Carry it in your Place and station: for that is the best the truest Picture of a man, which is like him in his ordinary severy-day's habit. Perticularly reflect upon the sins you have committed in *Company* with Others. By whose *Example* you have been drawn to sin: who may probably have been tempted by *yours*, and bewail it,
and

and if the persons are living, admonish them to Repent: and if you have injur'd and wrong'd any, acknowledg your fault, and to the utmost of your power, make speedy Restitution. If any of your Companions in sin are dead, and you fear dyed without Repentance; humble your self particularly before God for hauing contributed to their Damnation. I know of some who have made such a Catalogue of their Sins, with the most observable agrava-tions of them; which they constantly preferu'd; and frequently review'd, to keep them Humble, Penitent, Watchfull, and Thankfull; and on some occasions of secret Humiliation, have spread them before the Lord (as Hezekiah that of his enemy) Covering them selves with shame and Confusion of Face, by considering what they have been, and
thence

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thence admiring the Riches of free Grace, in the forgiveness of such Crimes, thro the Bloud of Christ.

Examine me, o Lord, and prove me; try my Reins and my Heart, for thy Loving kindness is before mine Eyes, and I will walk in thy Truth. Thou hast searched me, o Lord, and known me: thou knowest my Thoughts a far off: all my secret Sins are in the Light of thy Countenance: and thou art acquainted with all my ways: set my Sins in order before me, that I may Repent, and for sake them. Show me mine Infirmities, and weaknesses, that I may watch against them. And teach me to fudge and condemn my self, that I may not be judged of the Lord.

XXV.

How Christians ought to examine their Decays of Grace and Piety. The greatness of their Sin, and of their Losse under such a Declension: God's displeasure and departure from them considered, to awaken present Endeavors of a Recovery. In what manner the Faith of Adherence may be acted by one who hath no Assurance.

IT cannot but be of use to Believers also, at stated Times to examine themselves, concerning their Languishings and Decays in Grace, Falling from their first Love to a spirit of indifferency and Lukewarmness, disorderly walking, or unfruitfulness: wither *Gray Hairs* are not here and there upon them, and they know

know it not. For God may withdraw by degrees, so that his departure may not presently be perceiv'd: and some kind of Activity in Duty may be continued upon false Principles, and from Common Assistance, while a Christian, as to his spiritual State, may be under a dangerous Consumption. 'Tis not difficult for others to observe it some times, and would be visible enough to themselves, would they spare a few hours to examine the matter. The Punishment of such Backslidings, the loss of the quickning and comforting presence of the H. Spirit, deserves likewise to be inquir'd into, in order to a speedy remedy, and should enforce the Counsell.

I mean not barely the ebbing of *Affections* in the duties of Religion or the want of life and quickning from *sensible Consola-*
L 2 *tions,*

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tions, which new Converts, (especially such as have been reclaim'd from a course of notorious Impiety,) have more of at first then afterwards. Which doubting Christians should particularly take notice of, by the Instance of the *Prodigal*, who was extraordinarily feasted at his first return, but was doubtless contented afterwards with the ordinary Provisions of his Fathers house. Neither doth God dispence the same measure to *all* alike, nor to *any* alike at all Times: some, who are called to greater services, and sufferings then others, or had greater Conflicts before Conversion, may have a greater share then the rest of their Brethren. Neither will the same degree of Grace imparted to some persons, so discernably moue and comfort, as it will do some others of a different
Tem-

Temper. 'Tis not therefore so much to be the matter of our Enquiry, (if at all it need to be so,) wither we have more or less of sensible joy in the performance of duty. But

Wither we are not fallen and declin'd, *as to the inward vital Acts of Grace, and in the outward Fruits of Holiness.* Wither we have such clear, convincing Apprehensions of Divine and spiritual Truths, and the mysteries of the gospel, as formerly: wither our minds are not become more vaine and heedless: wither our knowledg of God, and of the Revelations of his will be as powerfull and efficacious upon our Hearts and Lives, as heretofore: wither there be not less frequency, less Consistency, less inward satisfaction in holy serious thoughts then formerly. You were wont

to pray and endeavor, that God might be first and last in your thoughts every day, and by frequent Ejaculations in civil affaires, to maintaine a dayly converse with God; but now you mind not wither it be so or not, yea you cannot but know, that it is not thus with you still. It was once your Burden to be pester'd with foolish, filthy, wordly, vaine Thoughts, especially on the Lord's Day, or in the worship of God, you rejected and disown'd them, you lamented and pray'd against them: do so much as examine, wither it be thus still.

Consider all your *Affections*, and their severall objects; and see wither a criminal Lukewarmness hath not diffus'd it self in to every of them. Examine every *Grace*: and see wither your Faith, Hope, Love, holy Desires,

fires, and Delight in God be not miserably abated: as to the strength and vigor, the efficacy, and frequent exercise of every of them: so that your Thoughts of God are few, cold, and lifeless, without desire, delight and love.

Consider the Opportunities and solemn Occasions of approaching the divine Presence: Are they as much the Desire of your souls, and the rejoycing of your Hearts as once they were? Are you not more easily diverted from them, less satisfy'd and refresh'd by them? are not all Gospel Ordinances less powerfull and quickning, and your profit and advantage thereby unspeakably less then formerly? Doe you hunger and thirst, and pant as the Hart after the water brooks, to draw nigh to God, and come into his Courts?

doe you make Conscience of preparing before hand ? do you come with a real desire , and design , and expectation of profiting , and bettering your Spirits ? do you joyn in every part of divine worship , with that attention , seriousness , and composure of mind , and taste the sweetness and benefit of such solemnities , as formerly ? are such services performed with that Awe of God , with that Humility , Fervency , and Intensness of Spirit , as some times they were ? are you not more Negligent and unconcern'd before and after , wither you find any thing of this or no ? your Desires weak , your Hearts flat , your Thoughts wandring , your Spirits trifling ? so the work be done , and the duty be over , (in how formal , customary , and careless a manner , soever it be ,) you
con-

consider it not, you lay it not to Heart, you reflect not upon it, you bewail it not, or at least are better contented and sooner quieted, and take less notice of the frame of your Heart in such Duties then formerly?

Examine farther how 'tis with you as to the great distinguishing Duties of an upright Christian, (if performed as they ought to be,) I mean *Secret Prayer and meditation*: Are you as strict and carefull, constant and Conscientious, frequent and abundant in these, as formerly? may not our Closets and places of Retirement witness against us? our former humble and importunate Prayers joyfull Thanksgivings, and sweet Contemplation of the Mysteries of Religion, compared with our present dayly practice, will testify that we are declin'd and fallen.

Moreover consider *the Evil of Sin*, and how your Heart stands affected to it. Is not your Hatred of Sin and Zeal against it much decayed? especially with respect to inward Spiritual sins, such as the secret workings of unbelief, and distrust, pride, envy, uncharitableness, &c. Doe you bewail it, shire against it, and shun the occasions, and fear the Temptations, that may lead you unto Sin, as once you did? Have you not lost much of that tenderness and holy Jealousy over your heart and ways, you formerly had? Doe you not now make more bold with Temptation? Are you not of oftner-conquered? and with less Reluctance? and by small Temptations &c.

Are you not more Unservicable? Root and Fruit in a withering condition? God less
Ho-

Honour'd, and Others less profited and edified by your Example and Life? doe you not adhere more to the world? conform to it, and comply with it in many things, which formerly you durst not have done? and are every day waxing worse? Make a pause a while and bethink your self what this will come to at last? even the little Good that remains is ready to dye.

May I not ask such Christians, or desire them to ask themselves, what is all ready the effect and consequence of this declension? Is not God's Spirit removed, and the Light of his Countenance Ecclipt? yea as to many of them, are they not under Sad apprehensions of God's displeasure? do they not feel the terrors of the Lord? do they not walk heavily from day to day? they that could

once converse with God on all occasions as a Friend, and a Father, do now think of God and are troubled: thick Darknes doth incompas them round about: they have lost the sence of his Love, the comforts of his presence, and their Song in the night, and see no relief. This is a more hopefull case however, then theirs, who are under great Backslidings and Desertion, and hardly sensible of it. To awaken and assist both, Consider I beseech you, whence you are fallen, and what you have lost, and what will be the issue of this, if Sicknes, or some smart Affliction overtake you, or if you should dye in this condition. And inquire seriously, and presently, into the cause of all this Evil: for a few transient thoughts will not affect the Heart and perswade to Action. And do it presently

sently, because by every delay
your work will be the harder,
your danger the greater, and your
Recovery the more difficult.
Reflect upon the *Sinfullness* as
well as Affliction of this case:
know you have displeased God,
and run from him, neglected
his Presence, and griev'd his
Spirit, and in what Instances you
have done so; that have made
him weary of his dwelling: what
Ordinances you have slighted;
what Duties you have omitted;
what sins you have given way to;
in order to Repentance and deep
Humiliation.

Can you contentedly sit still,
with this dismal State of Things?
while *God hath somewhat* (yea
a great deal indeed,) *against*
you, for having left your first
Love? will you not endeavor to
remove that which hath made
such a separation between God

and you, and brought you thus low? what Communion with, God, what communications of his Grace, what influences of his Spirit, and Evidences of his favor have you lost? and will you not acknowledg your Iniquity, and abase your selves in the Dust, and return to the Lord, and doe your first works? that he may heal your Backslidings, and receive you graciously; that you may againe take hold of his Covenant, and be at Peace with him.

But to be *at Peace* with God, is not the whole of your Concern, you need not only a Pardon, but a Physitian to heal you; as doth a Malefactor, that is not only liable to the Law, but desperately sick. Your State is sinfull and dangerous, as well as troublesome. From performing duties in such a manner as you now do, you
may

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may quickly be Tempted to let them altogether alone. God may be so far provok't to suffer Satan to make attempts upon you of that kind: and he is forward enough to make use of such an opportunity, to try all his Snares and Stratagems against you: till he prevail with you, to think hardly of God himself, unthankfully to overlook all his former kindnesses, to put the worst Interpretation that can be upon all his Providences, to distrust and quarel with him, as if his faithfulness had failed, and his Mercy were clean gone for ever, and there were no hope left, for one in your case: and so run into Desperation, and thro the subtilly and violence of Satan's Temptations, try the most foolish and unlawfull means for ease and cure, either open Licentiousness, or it may be, self Murder.

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Vid. Mr. Gilpin of Temptations. p. 2. chap. 6.

Therefore speedy present Repentance is necessary, to find out and mortifie every Corruption, and *that* especially, which Conscience tells you, you have most indulg'd, from whence your Distresse doth principally arise: Confessing your sin freely, fully, and without reserve, and waiting on God in the diligent use of all means, for the recovery of that which you have lost: and Justifying God in his Righteousness, Truth, Wisdom, Holiness, in all his Rebukes. That you may regaine a Spirit of Prayer, and taste the sweetness, vertue, and efficacy of every duty, and of every ordinance; and God may give you *the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness, and the Joy of the Lord may be your Strength*, for future service and suffering.

In the mean time do not cast
away

away your Hope, but tho you have (too justly) depriv'd your self of the *Faith of Assurance*, yet indeavor to maintaine and exercise the *Faith of Adherence*. *Vid. Dr. Owen on 130 Ps. 2.* Say unto God, that *because there is Forgiveness with him*, therefore *he is to be feared*. My sin is not too Great to be forgiven. Tis not the *Unpardonable Sin*: fer I desire to repent, and am resolv'd to return. I will still cleave to the Lord, and wait upon him, and follow hard after him; and take no other course for Deliverance and comfort. Mine is not a single Case: I am not the only Soul that hath been so distress'd, and yet found relief, by seeking unto God. This therefore *good for me to hope, and quietly wait* *Lam. 3 c. 26.* *for the Salvation of God.* I will draw near to God, I will lay at his foot, and continue in all ways of Worship and Duty, wherin I may

may hope to meet with the quickning and comfort of his Spirit. I will seek relief from no other; I will keep as near him as I can; wither els shall I goe, *he alone hath the words of Eternal Life; he alone can create* (what is the fruit of his own lips) *Peace, Peace.*

Vid. Mr. Baxter's method for Peace of Conscience.

I will encourage my self in the consideration of his General Grace, and the probabilities of his special Love: I will recollect my former Experiences, when I had some *good hope, thro Grace,* concerning my Adoption: *I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.* If God will give me so much Grace as to continue waiting, I will hope still; and *tho I walk in darkness, and see little or no Light, I will stay my self upon the Lord.* And if by the want of sensible Consolation he will make me more humble

humble, and keep me in a greater Submission to his will, I will bless his holy name; and derive more comfortable hope from thence, then from the most sweet and sensible Consolations I ever had; and look upon Humility, self denial, Dependance on God, Resignation to him, and Hatred of sin, as a better sign of his Love, then the highest fervors of Affection in his service can be.

Oh that I had formerly done as much for *Holiness*, as I have for Comfort! by the joyment of the *one*, I should have had more of the other: the exercise of Grace would have discover'd the Truth of it. Let me therefore accuse and condemn my self; but still trust, and love God, and wait upon him. Let me resolve never to choose a new Lord or Master. Or take up with any Portion beneath God him self; or any
of

of Hope or Salvation, but by J. Christ, my only Saviour, neither let me forsake the way of Faith and Holiness, for all the hopes and Happiness of this world, if put to my choice. But be allways able to say, Blessed be God I now can, that *I will return to my former Husband, for then it was better with me then now.* I had peace and refreshment in my former ways, I will return to them. Lord, forsake me not utterly! keep not thine Anger for ever: cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy H. Spirit from me: Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation, that my Heart may be enlarged to prayse thy name, and to run the way of thy Commandments.

Con-

XXVI.

Confession of Sin, Humiliation, and Repentance must follow upon Self-Examination. Advice concerning Repentance of some particular Backsliding. The great Perplexity and Distress of a Penitent Sinner represented, as a Caution against returning to Folly.

THat we may turn unto the Lord, is the end of searching and trying our Ways. Lord, I have been searching my Heart, and considering my ways, but can find little or no good; neither can I discover all that is evill in both. But I find enough to make my own Heart condemn me, and Thou, who art greater then my Heart, and knowest all things, mayst much more condemn me.
I am

I am altogether unclean, polluted, and abominable.

If I goe about to enumerate the Sins of my Thoughts, words, and actions, in all the periods of my Life hitherto; if I consider my omissions of Duty, and dayly Crimes by actual commission; if I reflect upon my Sins according to their respective objects, as either against Thee, o God, and against my Neighbour, and against my own Soul; or compare my Heart and Life with thy strict and holy Law, and think in how many Instances I have transgressed every of thy Righteous Commandments: I find they are more then the hairs on my head, they can not be number'd. *who can tell how oft he hath offended?* many of my sins make little Impression on my Memory, doe I observe them not, I remember them not; but
this

this hinders not but they may make deep Impression on my Conscience, which will one day be awake, and set them in order before me, and they are all written in thy book of Remembrance, in order to my final Judgment. *All my sins are before thee:* but thou requirest my humble Confession of them in order to Repentance and as a part therof that I freely acknowledg their hainous aggravations to shame and humble myself the more before thee whom I have offended and provok't.

How long did I serve diverse Lusts and Pleasures, with the neglect and forgetfullness of God? How sad a prospect may I take of the far greatest part of my Life past? especially of my younger years, which have been trifl'd away in vanity and folly? And since I have known the way of Truth, how shamefully have

have I prevaricated with God? I am confounded to consider, how often I have despised the Commandment, and rebelled against the Light; against the Principles of education, and the checks of Conscience; frequent warnings from God, and reproofs from Others; contrary to my Profession, and Experience, contrary to the obligation of peculiar mercies, solemn Promises, Resolutions, and Engagements and a nearer Relation to God than of many others; which sins have more dishonor'd my Lord, discredited his H. Gospel, gratifi'd the Devil, scandaliz'd the world, and strengthen'd the hands of the ungodly, then the sins of others. And alas! How much of my precious Time is thus gone, which if duely improv'd, would now afford me comfort to review.

How much Guilt have I con-
tra-

tracted every year, particularly in this last? I now begin another which will soon be gone as that which was concluded yesterday. And shall I only advance in Age, to increase the number of my sins, and heighthen my Account against the Day of Reckoning? In Temporal and Civil Affaires *Day unto Day uttereth knowledg, and Night unto Night teacheth Wisdom.* We are Taught by *Experience* many usefull lessons which we should not els have learnt; to reform many Errors and mistakes, to correct many rash and foolish Actions and Speeches, &c. And shall I not learn wisdom by the Experience of another year, in what concerns my greatest, my Eternal Interest? shall not the reflexion on my past sins prevent my Commission of the like?

How many Years hath God vouchsaf't me to work out my sal-

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vation? but how little have I done towards it? had I dyed this last year, how unprepar'd must I have made my Appearance before his Tribunal? what opportunities of doing and receiving good have I let slip? have I not made it more my business to seem Religious, then really to be so? how much of the Patience of God have I abus'd? refusing his calls to Repentance, resisting the strivings of his Spirit, smothering my Convictions, and turning the grace of God into wantonness? In stead of returning gratitude for all his Love, I have repeated my Transgressions after Forgiveness: and gone in a circle of Repenting and Sinning, even to this day. Lord, I am Asham'd and lay my self in the dust before thee. To me belongs nothing but shame and confusion of Face. If God should condemn and punish
me

me as a Rebell, and a Traitor, and give me the Portion of Hypocrites, I cannot but own his Justice; even in Hell I must do it, with my flaming Tongue and Breath.

O Spare me for thy mercies sake! *Enter not into Judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justifi'd: if Thou lay Judgment to the line, and equity to the Plummets.* Give me Repentance unto life, never to be repented of, never to be retracted againe. Bring me to the Bloud of *Jesus*, which cleanseth from all sin. Behold the sighings of a contrite Spirit: For *I* acknowledge my Transgressions unto thee, against whom I have sinned; o Lord; forgive the Iniquity of my Sin. I am unworthy to lift up my hands and Eyes towards Heaven, unworthy to be called thy son, or thy servant: I am vile in mine own eyes, because

I have made my self vile in thine,
For this I am troubled, and
mourn, and my Soul is grieved
within me.

O thou Heavenly Physitian of
Souls! from thy Pitty alone I
expect my cure. I am miserable
and undone without thy Compas-
sion, and expect no relief but
from the Treasure of thy Grace.
I must perish, and sink under the
burden of Sin, if thy mercifull
hand doe not save me, and lift me
up. I am intangled and insnar'd
by the Devill and my Lusts, and
without thy Succor can never
hope to get free. *O Lord for
give my Sin, and heal my Soul;
deliver and save me for thy mercies
sake!*

May I not yet *hope in thy mercy?*
thou hast mercifully born with
me hitherto: thou callest me to
repent: thou commandest me to
return, and promisest to forgive
those

those Sins which are confessed and forsaken: O do not cast me out of thy Sight and Presence, now I desire from the bottom of my Heart to return to thee! *I abhor my self in dust and ashes*, for my past Iniquities. But alas! such is the hardness of my Impenitent Heart, that I am even ashamed of my humblest Repentance: how much more may God despise and reject it? But hast thou not given thy H. Son to dye for Sinners? and exalted him to this very end, to be *a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance, and Remission of Sins?* And by the word of thy Grace, thou beseechest all, (even the Greatest Sinners,) to accept of mercy; and art more willing to pardon, then we can be to Repent. Tis thy Delight and Glory, agreeable to thy nature, and declared Name, *as a God gracious, and mercifull,*
M 3 *slow*

slow to Anger; and of great Kindness, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin. O Pardon mine Iniquity for it is great, and receive an humble Penitent, who implor's thy Grace, according to the Tenor of thy new Covenant, flying to the arms of thy Mercy, thro the merits of Jesus Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

Lord, hear my Prayer, and let not the mixture of my weaknesses and unworthiness turn it into Sin: but graciously vouchsafe to look upon a returning Prodigal; and cause me to hear the voice of Joy and Gladness, that my sorrowfull Heart may be comforted, and my life be directed to thy Praise. Lead me into the path of life, that I may no longer erre from the way of thy Commandments: Teach me to do

On Time and Eternity. 271

do thy Will, o God, and write thy Law upon my heart, that I may never more *return to Folly*. I am convinc't of the Evill of Sin, of thy Right to govern me, of the equity and Justice of thy Law, of the sweetness and rewards of keeping thy precepts: O sanctifie my Heart, and make me *Sound in thy Statutes*, that I may hate every false way, and be devoted to thy Fear, the remainder of my Life.

If there be any particular Lust or Wickedness, which thro the power of Temptation, and the deceitfullness of Sin you have fallen into; that hath wasted Conscience, and robb'd you of your Peace, and provok't God to write bitter things against you; be sure to humble your self without delay in an especial manner for that Backsliding: Confess it freely, with its aggra-

vations. Consider wither it was not after some special manifestation of God's Love, after some special warning, some strong Conviction, under or soon after some great Affliction from God, or some more then ordinary kindness of his Providence, &c. and impress such Thoughts, to humble your self the lower, search into the grounds and causes of such Apostacy, such as the abatement of your watchfulness, the neglect of serious closet devotion, making bold with Temptation, too great compliance with vaine Company, venturing too far in lawfull or indifferent Things, too much Confidence in your own Wisdom, Strength and stedfastness, not fearing sufficiently the Approaches and Beginnings of Sin, or avoiding the fuell, incentives, and occasions of it, &c.

&c. Palliate and disguise nothing, that may make your sin exceeding sinfull, least by some little Art of the Devil, you deceive your self by an half-Repentance; and the Evil Spirit, you think to be cast out, return againe with seven worse then himself, and so your latter end be worse then your Beginning. For if the sin be not truly hated, but only cover'd over with penitential Ashes, it will quickly flame out againe, when it meets with combustible matter, and a strong blast of Temptation.

But if you are griev'd to the very Heart, and abhor the Sin; and resolve to quitt it, you need not doubt of God's readines to receive you to Mercy. His Spirit is yet striving with you, if you are willing to Repent, and return to God. He sought you, and call'd you to return, when you were

wandering as a lost sheep in the broad way; and can you think, he will not be found of you, if you seek him with your whole Heart? Therefore renew your Repentance, and beg more earnestly a Spirit of Humility, Holy Fear, and Watchfullness: and every morning implore divine succors against that Sin, and all *Temptations* to it. (*Which*, as much as possible, you must avoid.) Constant and fervent Prayer, after Repentance, must be your refuge, and your Remedy. If you let fall your hands, this *Amaleck* will prevail againe: as soon and as far as you fail in the constancy, and fervency of that Duty, your Sin will get strength, and successfully attempt you another Time. But by this practise, God may turn Evil to work for Good, make you gaine by your loss, stand the faster by your Falls, and become stron-

stronger by the discovery of your weakness, and better establisht for the future.

But take heed that you pervert not the Grace of God, and encourage your self to sin againe by the supposition, that if you should Fall, 'tis but to *Repent*, and renew your Resolutions, and all will be well. This is a subtle Artifice of Satan, but such methinks, as should take with none, who have ever known by *Experience*, what it is to *Repent*. Who have felt the burden of Sin to be heavier than a *Millstone*; then the weight of a *Mountaine*. Who have tasted, *how evill and bitter a thing it is, to depart from God*. Who have loathed and abhorr'd themselves, with deep Remorse, and sorrow, and Anguish of Spirit: wishing with all their Hearts, that they had not sinn'd, and if it were in their

Luke 23.
6. 30
17. 22.

power would give all the world to retrieve it, and would rather dye then commit that Folly again, they then repented of. Let those who have not their own Experience to confirm this, read over (and consider the case of *David*, when he wrote) the Penitential Psalms. How many like him have roar'd and cryed out under the sence of sin, of stings and furies in their Conscience, of the poison'd Arrows surrounding them wherever they went: from the weight of sins Malignity, the apprehensions of God's Anger, and the consequent Fears of his Wrath. Serious Repentance after great Transgressions is another Thing then most imagine it. When their aggravated Sins shall besett them behind, and before, be placed in order before their eyes, and set in array against them. 'Tis allways a work
of

of Difficulty as well as Importance, to crucifie corrupt affections, to tear a beloved Lust from the Heart, with self-indignation to abhor and cast away what before you lou'd and delighted in. How did David's sin stare him in the Face, *it is continually with me, it is ever before me*, saith He. It haunted him like a Spectre, or like Belshazar's handwriting on the wall, it still appear'd before him in some horrid shape.

How ever Sin may smile in its first address, and bespeak us in flattering language, and promise Pleasure, and Profit, and great Advantages and Satisfaction; These are but fair Appearances; This is but the outside of the Cup, and the colour of the Liquor: it will prove Gall and Wormwood, and a mixture of deadly Poison, if ever God set it home upon the Conscience,

and awaken us to a true sense of it. And the Continuance of dayly Repentance for Sin, Which all Christians are called to, is no such easy matter neither. Constant self-abasement and Humiliation before God, from a sense of his Majesty and Holiness, and of our many Sins, and pollution thereby: the imperfection of our best duties continually to be bewailed, inordinate affections to be still mortified, always resisting and opposing Sin, in its Root and branches, conflicting against the whole Intrest of the Flesh, the world, and the Devil, seeking after more Holiness, to be deriv'd unto us by the Grace of Christ, to be wrought in us by his Spirit, and maintain'd by his power; and making dayly applications to the Fountaine of all Grace, for spiritual strength, to continue our warfare against Sin,
in.

in all Instances of outward duty and inward Actings of Grace, even as long as we live; all this is included in it. Due Apprehensions concerning *Repentance*, would teach us to beware of *Sin*.

XXVII.

The necessity of Christian Resolution to Upright, Persevering Obedience; how Full and extensive it ought to be, and yet Humble. By what means we may be assisted to perform that which we Resolve.

HAVING aeknowledg'd my Transgressions unto God, and beg'd forgiveness, and experimentally learnt *the Evil of Sin* by the bitterness of Repentance, I resolve for the future to watch against it more

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narrowly, and against every thing that leads to it: endeavoring to please and honour my God and Saviour by an upright obedient Heart and Life: And for the Remission of my former contracted Guilt, I trust to *J. Christ* according to the Revelation made in the Gospell, of what he is, hath done, and suffer'd, and continues to do in Heaven, for the salvation of Repenting Sinners, who desire to come unto God by Him.

But how often, o my Soul, have I mockt God, and deceiv'd my self, with formal and faint Purposes of amendment? my good Resolutions have been all of them *as the morning cloud, and the Early dew*, which quickly pass'd away. One fresh assault of Temptation hath swept away all my good Purposes as a spiders web. I have falsified so many,
and

and broke my word so often, that I dare not trust to any thing I now resolve, or rely on any promise I should farther make. Succor me therefore o Lord, by thy Powerfull Grace, that what was defective in my former fruitless Resolutions, may be now rectified. Let me be more Humble in the sense of my weakness, more dependant on thy Grace, and more heartily seek it from time to time. *Strengthen me with Strength in my Soul, with might and power in my inward man*, that I may so resolve and purpose, as to perform: that I may not be one day hot, and the next cold, zealous in the Beginning, but faint and lukewarm in the Progress, fervent and serious only in Resolving, but weak and impotent in the Execution.

Having chang' my Master, my End, and my Hopes, by returning

ning unto God, from whom I had gone astray, I firmly resolve, thro the assistance of his Grace, to change my course of Life. That old things being done away, all things may become new: *that being made free from Sin, by pardoning Mercy, and become the servant of Christ, I may have my fruit unto Holiness, that my End may be Eternal Life.* In the interim wither I live or dye, let it be unto the Lord, resolving both in Life and Death to be absolutely His. And to that purpose, O my Soul, let me seek for continual supplies of Grace from Christ my Head, to inable me to yeild ready obedience, in the most difficult, hazardous, painful and humbling duties. In vaine do I resolve it, without the assistance of his mighty Power, to strengthen my Heart and hands, whenever I am called to such a
 Trial

*Rem. 6.
 c. 22.*

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Trial of my sincerity. Without it I shall never recover my Liberty, or break a sunder those bonds and cords, wherewith I have formerly been held Captive, as the Servant of Sin and Satan, such is the weakness and treachery of of my own Heart, the influence of ill Examples, and the subtlety and cunning of the Tempter, that otherwise I shall quickly change my mind, and *return to Folly, as the Dog to his vomit.* The Spirit is so weak, and the Flesh so frail, the snares of the World so many, the power of remaining Corruption so strong, and of myself I am so unsettled and wavering, fickle and unsteady, and prone to Backsliding, that all my strongest Purposes will not be sufficient, without daily strength from above. My senses are so deceitfull, my Passions so ungovernable, the Rule and Law
I am

I am to walk by, so strict, and spiritual, and extensive, Criminal Omissions may be so frequent, and easily overlook't, so many several and difficult Duties are to be performed, and by every change of my Condition, or of God's Providence so many new dangers, and new duties may arise, that I fear the issue of my firmest Resolutions. So strict a watch must always be kept, such humility and Caution is every where to be practis'd, such speedy Repentance required after every fall; with thankfulness and contentment in every State, under all Calamities, be they never so many or never so pinching, and perseverance herein absolutely necessary, tho never so many stratagems be used to discourage me from proceeding, or to intice me to goe back, or turn aside to some other Path, that if God had not
pro-

promised me his Continued presence, and that his *Grace shall be sufficient for me, and that I shall not be Tempted above what I am able to bear*; I should utterly despaire of making good what I now resolve.

But besides these promises to encourage my resolved obedience, he hath left upon record in his word, many glorious *Examples* of his assisting and rewarding the courage and resolution of his servants to continue faithfull: as in the case of *Joseph, Daniel, and his Three, Friends, &c.* If Christ stand by and strengthen me, I know *I shall be able to do all things*: I shall not then be flattered, or frighted out of the way of my duty: no wind that can blow shall then turn me to another point: nothing shall then be able to prevail for my consent, to a willfull and deliberate forsaking
of

of God; no Argument, no Temptation; tho Privacy, Opportunity, Impunity from men, with rewards of wordly Gaine and Honour, should all concurr to enforce a Temptation. But by that heavenly mind, I shall be preserv'd Humble, Temperate, Chast, patient, Thankfull, self-denying, crucified to the World, and *hold fast my Integrity till I dye: still perfecting Holiness in the fear of God, growing in Grace, and in the Knowledge of my Lord and Saviour J. Christ*, waxing stronger from day to day, be seldomer surprized, offend less, and repent more quickly, and watch more narrowly afterwards: tiil at last I receive the Crown.

Fix therefore I beseech thee, most Gracious God! my unfeigned Resolutions of cleaving to thee, *with full purpose of Heart,*
and

and show thy strength in my weakness, by inabling me to doe what I now resolve. To that end, teach me to watch over *my Heart*, to keep it with all diligence, to be more conversant with my own Thoughts, examining the motions that arise in my Heart, whence they come, and whither they goe, and what they tend to, that I may suppress the beginnings of Sin. Let me live no longer as a stranger to my self, but by self-reflexion dwell more at home, reckoning my principal Work to be within doors, to keep my own vineyard. Teach me to watch over my senses, to guard the door of my Lips, to govern my Passions, to be wary of my Company, to be circumspect in every step of my dayly walk, to call my self frequently to a reckoning, to cast up my accounts at the foot of every page, by every days

review of my Actions, to live allways as in God's presence, and be awed every where by the thought of his Holy Eye, to shun the occasions and appearances of Evil, &c.

And because no place, no Condition, no Employment is exempted from Temptations, let me fortifie my self every morning, against all Assaults for that day, by Serious Prayer, as Holy *David* was wont to do. *My voice,* (saith he) *shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee, and will look up.* Psalm. 5. v. 3. 4. Let the law of God be my dayly and delightfull study: that I may be able presently to bring my words and Actions to the Touchstone; and know how to manage *the sword of the Spirit*, on all occasions, *against the fiery Darts of the Devil*: that knowing the
rule,

rule, I may not be doubtfull or at a losse, when ever I am Tempted: I may not make a stand to parley, ~~but~~ immediately, summon all my forces to resist, and reject the snare; being assur'd from God, that the Continuance of this warfare shall end in a most Glorious Victory. *He will shortly tread down Satan under our feet. Thanks be to God, thro Jesus Christ, my Lord.*

XXVIII.

The Import and Obligation of our Baptismal Covenant. The renewal of it by a solemn Dedication of our selves to God the Father, Son, and H. Spirit, exemplifi'd and recommended.

ALL this, O my soul, which I have now resolu'd on is no more then what I am obliged to,
N by

by my vow in Baptism: to renounce the Devil and his works, the Flesh and the Lusts therof, the World, and conformity to it, that I may Love and Serve the Lord: agreeable to the undoubted Right which God hath in me by Creation, Redemption, and his innumerable other Benefits. But *The outward washing of Baptism*, and a visible profession of obedience, *will not save me, without the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.* 1 Pet. cap. 3. v. 21. May I not by the consideration of my Baptismal Covenant suppose God speaking to my Conscience, to this „effect? Will you take me for „your whole Portion and Felicity? and my Law for the constant Rule of your obedience? „and fight against the world, the „flesh, and the Devil, to your „lives end? will you believe in
Jesus

„ Jesus Christ, and receive him as
„ a Prince and Saviour? and ad-
„ here to the faith and obedience
„ of the Gospel, how hazardous
„ and difficult soever, the profes-
„ sion and practice of it may be?
„ Will you receive the B. Spirit,
„ as your Teacher Sanctifier, and
„ Comforter? and cherish all his
„ Motions, to enlighten, purifie,
„ confirm, comfort, and assist
you? 'Tis my hearty consent to
these Terms, and resolved com-
pliance with them, which
Baptism obligeth to? and *this is*
the Answer of a good Conscience
towards God.

I have often renewed this Co-
venant on several occasions; but
did I ever duely consider the tenor
and obligation of it? How have
I lyed unto the God of Truth?
dealt deceitfully whath Him? and
been False and Fickle, treache-
rous and unfaithfull to what I

promised? O let me now againe repeat it, and give up my self once more to be the Lords, more unfeignedly, more firmly then ever I have hitherto done! that the bonds of God upon me may be strengthned, and my soul more throughly ingag'd to be the Lords. O help me to do it with the greatest seriousness, as the most important Affaire of my whole Life! by thine aid and grace alone shall I be sincere and cordial in this surrender and Dedication of my self. O breath upon my soul, most H. Spirit, (*the Power of the Highest,*) that there may be no Hypocrisy or Reservation in this so weighty and solemn Transaction between God and me!

O most Blessed and Glorious TRINITY! Father, Son, and H. Spirit, Thy favor is my Life, and thy Lovingkindness is
bet-

better then Life : Thy Will should
have been my Rule, thy word
my Law, thy Glory my end, to
please thee my principal Business,
and to enjoy thy Love and Presence
my ultimate Felicity. But I
am one of thy revolted Creatures,
who have lost thine Image,
and rebell'd against thy Law,
sighted thy Authority, and re-
jected thy Grace, and deserve to
be cast out of thy sight, and
banisht from thy Presence for
ever. Nevertheless, *O most
mercifull God, and Father,* upon
thy gracious invitation and call,
I now return to thee my rightfull
Lord: acknowledging thee, as
my Almighty, Wise, and
Bountifull Creator, my absolute
Owner my Righteous Gover-
nour, my End, my Happiness
and Chief Good. I now accept
thine offer'd Mercy; I now
submit to the Scepter of thy Grace;

and give up my self to Thee, as my King, and my God; to rule and sanctifie me now, and be my Everlasting Portion. I desire to be no longer my own, but Thine, to whom of right I belong, and ought to be devoted. I yeild my self to Thee, *O my Lord!* Accept and possess that which is thine own. I lay my self at thy Foot, at all Times, and in all Conditions, to be at thy dispose, and in every thing to acquiesce in thy Good Pleasure. Deliberately resolving, with unfeigned and free consent of my Will, to walk before Thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the days of my Life. Hereby I consecrate and devote myself to be thy perpetual avowed Servant: *Lord, I am thy servant, I am thy servant, the Son of thine Hand maid.* Tho other Lords have had dominion over me, I will now make
men-

mention of thy Name, and of thy Righteousness *only*, by Jesus Christ.

O Blessed Jesus, my All sufficient Saviour! Thy dying Love, infinite Condescension, and matchless Grace hath at last overcome me, and constrain'd me to resolve to be wholly Thine, who hast redeem'd and bought me with thy most precious Bloud. I now acknowledge and own Thee, as *my Lord, and my Jesus*, my Prophet, Priest, and King, my Sacrifice, Surety, and Ransom, to satisfie for my sins, and reconcile me unto God, to instruct me in his will, and teach me the Mysteries of his Kingdom, and the way to the Father. How often hast thou open'd thine arms, and called me, yea beseecht me to come unto thee, and accept of Life? but I refused, to come. I adore thy mercifull Condescen-

tion, that yet thou wilt receive me on such easy Terms. O thou Lord of life and glory now accept of an unworthy helpless Sinner, who flies to Thee as his only Refuge and Hope: who is convinc't that *None but Christ, None but Christ* can make his Peace with God, and save from wrath come. I acknowledge thy Title to me, and my obedience, and to all I have, by dying for me. I desire to take thy yoke upon me, for it is Easy; and thy Burden, which is Light. I desire to be intirely and for ever thine, *in an Everlasting Covenant, never to be broken*: to take up the Crosse, and follow thee, whither so ever thou shalt lead me, thro the straight Gate, and the *narrow* way. I will reserve no Lust, refuse no Labor, grudge at no suffering, stick at no difficulty, so I may please, and honour thee,
and

and continue in thy Love. O send abroad more of thy Love in my Heart, to make all Things easy for his sake, *who hath loved me, and washed me from my Sins in his own Blood.*

O God the Holy Ghost, I acknowledge Thee as my Great Teacher and Sanctifier, and give up my self to Thee, as the Author of all saving Knowledg and Holiness: By Thee I have been convinc't of my Sin, against the Law of God, and the Gospel of Christ, and of my necessity of his merit, satisfaction, and Righteousness, to Justifie my guilty Soul, by procuring the Forgiveness of Sin, and my acceptance with God; and of the freeness of his Love, the Riches and all sufficiency of his Grace, towards all who come unto God by Him. I adore Thee, O most *Blessed Spirit*, as proceeding
N 5 and

and sent from the Father and the Son, to renew all the Powers of my Soul, and restore the divine Image there; to enlighten my mind, to know and receive the Truth, *as it is in Jesus*, and purifie my Heart: and to sanctifie all the Members of my Body, and make them Instruments of Righteousness unto Holiness, which before were servants unto Sin; and gradually to deliver me from the power, the defilement, and abode of Sin; as from the Guilt and Punishment by the blood of Jesus. And as the *Witness* of God to the Truth of the H. Scriptures; and as the Great *Paraclete*, to comfort and establish the Hearts of Belivers, sealing them up to the day of Redemption, and giving them the Earnest of the Heavenly Inheritance. *O Blessed Spirit*, be thou my witness, that tho I have violated
the

the Law of God, and defac't his Image, and formerly undervallu'd the Love of Christ, and the Grace of the Gospell, yet by thine aid I now accept what I have so long neglected: and thankfully devote my self hence forward to be the Lords in a Covenant Relation.

But fearing and distrusting my self, I give up my self entirely to the conduct of thy Grace, depending upon it for my establishment and perseverance. O form my Heart into an obediential Frame! that in every thing I may endeavor to answer the Ends and Obligations of this Devoted State.

To this *One God* I have once againe dedicated and resign'd my self; to serve, and please, and honour Thee, in Thought, Word, and Act, to the last moment of my Life: in the Performance of all Duties, even

300. *Devout Reflexions*

those whic I have been most aver-
se from; in the mortification of
every Lust, and the forsaking of
every Sin, even those which I
was once most addicted to: Re-
solving deliberately to allow my
self in nothing, great or little,
secret or open, which I shall know
or believe to be contrary to thy
holy will, making it my business to
be fruitfull in good works, to the
praise of my Redeemer: waiting
in the use of all his apointed
means for higher measures of
7. Grace and Holiness, to be more
victorious over inward Lusts, and
outward temptations, still *press-*
ing towards the mark for the prize
of my high and holy Calling, even
eternal Life.

I call Heaven and Earth, o
Lord, to witness this day, that
I own and avow this to be my
Mind, and the settled Prevailing
Purpose of my Soul. This I againe
rati-

On Time and Eternity. . 301

ratifie and confirm, without any
Clauses, or Exceptions. *So help
me, O my God.* Glory be to God
the Father, God the Son, and
God the H. Spirit.

XXIX.

*Practical and Consolatory Refle-
xions on the preceding Self-
dedication, or Covenant with
God.*

I Have this day solemnly avou-
ched the Lord to be my God, to *Dent. 6.
c. 17-18.*
walk in his ways: thereby to fortifie
my Resolutions, that *I and my
House*, (and All that I can per-
suade to be of my mind,) *will
serve the Lord.* I intend, desire,
and hope never willfully to viola-
te the Faith, I have now plighted
in the presence of God: but to
continue *stedfast unmoveable,*

allwas abounding in the work of the Lord, &c.

Should I undertake any new Employment, or enter into any new Condition, or change the place of my Abode, where I might see more of God's dishonour, and meet with more and stronger Temptations to Sin, and be called to the performance of more difficult duties, greater Watchfullness and self denial, &c. I would hope hereby to ingage the presence of God with me, and his Blessing on all my Affaires, on which depends the success of all that I undertake: and would hope the better to preserve my Integrity, not only *This Year*, but in all the remaining portion of my Time, by the abiding sense of my Covenant with God, thus seriously renewed.

This is the method, I have been often advis'd to, for *Peace of Con-*

On Time and Eternity. 303

Conscience, under doubts and scruples concerning my spiritual State: to put the matter out of doubt, by againe accepting the offered mercy and Grace of the Gospell, and heartily consenting to the new Covenant: giving up my self to God in Christ, to be ruled and saved by him. Blessed be God, I have now done so. Lord, say *Amen* to thy part of the Covenant, that Thou art and wilt be *my God*; as I desire unfeignedly to do to mine, that I will be *thy Servant*.

But because Articles are sooner consented to, then made Good; (tho I seriously intend never to disown this my solemm Act and Deed, but firmly to adhere to it, as long as I live; that *having sworn, I will endeavor to perform it*, that this shall be my Everlasting Choice, never to be recanted or alter'd, yet) considering
the

the sad Instances of my former weakness, and the vigilance and subtle malice of my Great Adversary, I againe implore the succor of divine Grace, to keep it for ever in the purpose of my Heart, that it may be *as the Laws of the Medes and Persians*, never to be revert. I have given up my name to be Thine; O put thy Fear into my Heart that I may never depart from Thee. Imprint thy Laws upon my Heart, that my obedience may be uniform and universal, unwavering and perpetual; suitable to honourable and near a Relation to Thee. I am sensible I want *Wisdom* and *Strength* to that purpose, but thou hast bid me ask it of Thee, who givest liberally, to All without desert, and upbraidest not, with present unworthiness or former faults. O lead me not into Temptation, but deliver me from Evil.

Stand

Stand by and strengthen me in
the Hour of Trial, least I forget
my vows, and deny Thee. O that
my Soul may never draw back,
least Thine have no Pleasure in
me. I can serve no better Ma-
ster: O let mine Ears be bored to
the door of thine house, as the
Token and Assurance of my
being thy Servant unto Death I
know 'tis my Duty, I am sensible
'tis my Priviledge, and Honour,
I am couvin'd, that 'tis my Interest
and Felicity; my Soul, my Life,
my present and everlasting Well-
fare and All depends upon it, that
thou shouldst be *my God for ever*:
O conduct me by thy H. Spirit of
Grace, that I may walk and Act,
as having heartily consented he
should be so: and *direct my Heart
into thy Love, and the faithfull
keeping of thy Commandments.*
That when so many Professors
make shipwrack of Faith and a
Good

Good Conscience, and discredit the Religion of my Lord, by their shamefull Falls, thou mayst make me to stand, and improve the warning of their Examples, to walk humbly, and *while I stand to take heed lest I fall.*

Having thus surrendered my self to God, what is there o my Soul, that is ever like to prevail with me to goe back, and revolt from him? Is the gratification of a Lust, the securing of an Estate, compliance with a Friend, the pleasing of a Superior, living in Ease and Honour, and outward Prosperity for a little while, the saving my Body from suffering, or my Life from violence, (or what ever els be the Motive of my ufaithfullness to God, and Apostacy from Him,) Is Any, is All of these any way considerable, compared with *the Blessedness of having God to be my God.*

For

For thereby I have the forgiveness of all my Sins ; and the Assurance of his Favor, the certainty of present Protection, and Provision, all Creatures reconciled to me, and to be employed for my Good, as the Friend of God; All things to work together for my Advantage ; and by the evidence of my Adoption, a well grounded hope of Eternal Life. *God as my Sun and Shield, will give Grace and Glory, and withhold no Good Thing.* So unspeakably Comprehensive are the Privileges of so near a Relation to God in Christ. *O happy are the People, who are in such a case! Blessed are the Persons, whose God is the Lord.*

Do I resolve to abide by my Choice, and to trust in Christ, for persevering Grace, and shall I not, ought I not to take Comfort in it? Shall I not give God the
Glo-

Glory of his *infinite Goodness*, by adhering to him and rejoycing in him, notwithstanding all Temptations to the Contrary? Casting all my care upon him, and quieting my self in the All-sufficiency of my Heavenly Father: having a *God in Covenant*, who will supply all my wants, and take care of me as his Own. Shall I not give him the glory of his *Truth and Power*, by trusting him in every Condition? by confidence in his Promise, Dependance on his Word, Faithfulness to his Interest, and Constancy in his Service to the end? Is it not a most encouraging Thought, that *God doth never Abandon any, who do not first forsake him*? And after such strict Engagements as I have laid upon my self, shall I ever strike the fatal stroke with my own Hand? shall I be off and on, say
and

On Time and Eternity. 309

and unsay, promise and retract?
and after I have proceeded thus
far, shall I forsake the Fountaine
of Living Waters, and turn agai-
ne to broken Cisterns?

After I have examin'd my self,
considerd my ways, confest my
Sins, and upon serious Delibe-
ration am come to a *Resolve*, and
in pursuance of it have devoted
my self with such solemnity to be
the Lords, shall I ever after this,
forsake Him, & my own Mer-
cies, and lightly esteem the Rock
of my Salvation? Now I have
learn'd in some measure what *Sin*
is, by the sorrows and anguish of
an *Heartly Repentance*; now I
have discoverd so much of the
Snares and Devices of *Satan*,
wherby I have formerly been be-
traid: now I am sensible of the
dangerous and powerfull in-
fluence and Infection of *bad*
Company, the Treachery of
fleshly

fleshly Lusts, the bewitching Temptations of the World, and have tasted a little, by my own Experience, of the Pleasantness of Wisedoms Paths, the Peace and satisfaction of Devotedness to God, by the present Rewards of a calm Conscience, the communications of divine Grace, and the Encouragement of an Holy Hope, &c. and am persuaded of the Stability of his Word, and the Certainty of Eternal Life to all who continue in well-doing; shall I after all this ever break with God againe? shall I ever cancell this Engagement? violate this my Vow? and falsifie so many repeated Promises and Resolutions? Oh that his Power may rest upon me! and his Grace work in me both to will and to Doe! *that this God may be my God for ever, and my Guide unto Death.* Let me never reassume
me

On Time and Eternity. 311

me this Gift and Surrender of my self, or defraud God of his Right and Propriety. *His I am, and Him I will serve:* living wholly to Him; using all I have for him: being willing he should *do what he list with his own*, and consequently dispose of me, and of all that any way belongs to me, *as shall seem Good in his Eyes.* I am *Thine*, O Lord save me. Command me my work, appoint me my Duty, direct my Station, order my Condition; let me be *Thine*, tho imploid in the meanest service, and the most laborious selfdenying work. Tho I should be but *a Doorkeeper in thine House, an Hewer of Wood, or a Drawer of water:* Tho I must pinch the flesh, and swim against the Tide, and renounce what before I valued: yet *This God shall be my God for ever.*

By this means when I come to
Dye,

Dye, (if God should add more years to the little number I have past, besides this I have now begun,) I may be able to say with Upright *Hezekiah*, *Remember Lord, how I have walked before Thee in mine Integrity.* That in the face of Death, and the Grave; in the view of another World, and the near prospect of Eternity, I may be able to Reioyce in Hope, and Say, *Lord Jesus, Receive my Spirit.* Thou art my Saviour, and I have waited for thy Salvation. I have sought Thee with my whole Heart; I have chosen thy Favor rather than Worldly Grandeur and Prosperity; I have prized thy *Love*, and endeavor'd to obey Thee, (as the best Expression of my own) tho with many Imperfections, which I bewail; I have delighted more in thy Service and Presence, than in the Plea-

Pleasures of Sin and vanity ; thy Testimonies have been the Joy of my Heart ; I took no delight in the Company of the ungodly , after I was devoted to Thee ; O let me not have my Portion with them in the other World ! Fortifie me now against the King of Terrors , strengthen me in this my last Conflict , enable me to triumph over Death by the Crosse of Christ , (my victorious Redeemer ,) and carry me thro the dark valley , at the divorce of Soul and Body , and grant me an abundant entrance into thine heavenly Kingdom ; Let me be numbred among thy Chosen , and my Body wait in Hope , 'till the general Resurrection , that I may then see thy Glory , and dwell with Thee for ever .

By voluntary consent and Choice , thou art my God ; and thy Presence in Heaven , my ultimate Felicity ; I have trusted to thy Gracious Promise , to prepare me for it , and bring me to it ; *O fullfill thy Word unto thy Servant , wherein thou hast caused me to hope , and mercifully receive*
O my

my departing Soul, that seeks Thee, that loves Thee, that breaths after Thee, and desires nothing but to know Thee better, and love Thee more, and be more entirely conform'd to thine Image, and live allways in thy B. Presence. *Amen, Holy Father, be it unto me according to thy Word; thro the Merits and Intercession of my Allsufficient Saviour, J. Christ, the Faithfull and True Witness, in whom all thy Promises are Yea, and Amen.*

XXX.

Thanksgiving to God for his Innumerable Benefits and Mercies, particularly in the Year Past: with some Direction and Advice concerning it.

How precious and delightfull are the Thoughts of thy Benefits? *O Lord how great is the sum of them?* Should I count them, they are more in number then the stars. Shall I not observe and consider them? maintaine a grateful
sens

sense of'em and publickly acknowledg them on all occasions? that I may *Bless the Lord at all Times*, and his *Prayse be continually in my mouth*. More especially should I *conclude and begin the Year* with solemn Praises to my Great Benefactor and Preserver. I ought to begin and close *every Day* with it, therby to make the *outgoings of the Morning and the Evening to rejoyce in God*. Every year, every Day, every Hour, every Moment offers me an occasion to praise Him: because he is every minute gracious; and hath been so ever since he gave me my Being.

Allmost one half of my Time hath been spent in *Sleep*, when I remember not God, nor my self; yet doth He, who never slumbers or sleeps, remember me in Mercy, and watch over me for Good. Yea tho in the other half, by Day, I have forgotten him in a worse sense, by casting off his Fear, and not remembering that his Holy Eye is upon me, yet hath he not forgotten to be Gracious.

Therefore I will Praise the name of God with a song, and will magnifie him with Thanksgiving, and never forget his Benefits. With which Sacrifice, he is better pleased then with an Oxe or Bullock, that hath horns and hoofs.

He hath prolonged my Life *this last Year*, when so many others, of his more usefull servants, have been remov'd by Death: and given me farther Time and Space to Repent, when multitudes have been surpriz'd in their Impenitence. Yea, *it was He*, who formed me in the womb, and brought me safely into the world; by whose Providence I have hitherto been supplied: *in Him I live, and move, and continually exist*, To his undeserved Goodness I am beholding for all the Good of any kind, which I ever enjo'y'd: to his Bounty I am indebted for all that I now have; and must depend upon it, for what ever I can here after expect.

Thro Infancy and Childhood he was pleas'd to preserve me; favouring me

Psalm 69. v. 30.

with

with many advantages in my Birth and Education; providing for me a Competent Livelihood; disposing the Circumstances of my Condition, Relations, Places of Abode, &c. more advantageously than he hath done for Thousands: affording me many helps, for the Improving of my mind, and the increase of Knowledg: and preventing my Necessities, and even my Desires, with numberless Blessings which I never so much as askt for. He hath caused Several of my *Relations* to yeild me Comfort, when they might have been sore Afflictions. He hath raised up *Strangers* to befriend me, and show me kindness. How many favours have I receiv'd from God, by the Instrumentality of other Men? to whom God gave the Will, and the Power, the Opportunity, and the Inclination.

How often hath he *deliver'd my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling*, by seasonable Preservations? so that I do yet *walk be-*

fore Him in the Land of the Living. He hath rescu'd me from the brink of many a Precipice, which, thro Ignorance or Inadvertency, did not apprehend or Fear. When I knew not which way to turn, he hath made my Path plaine. Under sinking Disappointments he hath commanded Succour; and been *a present Help in the time of Trouble*. In Great Perplexities, his Eye hath been my Guide; and his own Arm hath brought Salvation: it may be by the Ministry of his *H. Angels*, obeying his order, and giving unusual Intimations of very great, and otherwise unsuspected Dangers: or sending Relief and Deliverance, by such small, unlikely, and unexpected Means, as carried the name of *God* visibly ingraven on them. Innumerable Calamities he saves me from, which Others groan under: and as many Blessings am I favor'd with, whereof they are destitute. He Spreads my Table, and fills my Cup, and gives me *All Things richly to enjoy*, when many Excellent Persons, of whom the World
is

is not worthy, are fed with *the bread of Affliction, and the Water of Affliction.* Others have only Necessaries, or but few Conveniencies, in Comparison with the Plentifull Provisions God hath made, for my Chearfull Obedience to Him. And shall I not Praise Him for *the precious Things of Heaven, the blessings of the Earth, the dew, and the deep?* and more especially for *the Goodwill of Him, who dwelt in the Bush,* to sanctifie and sweeten All: Wherby Common Mercies become the pledge and fore-runner of better Things; as the fruit of his Special kindness, the witness of his Truth, and the seed of Peace and Joy, and Righteousness, and Praise; by reason of his Blessing on all that I possess, which otherwise would prove a snare, and a Temptation, and be intermixt with a Curse.

And besides the ordinary and Continued Bounty of every Day, in the midst of how many *Difficulties and Dangers,*

Deut. 33. v. 13. 14.

have I felt the dear obligations of his Preserving Mercy? abroad and at home; in forreign Countries, as well as my own; in the midst of Enimies, and among Friends; in all Places, and at all Times.

He hath prolonged my *Health*, or made my Bed in *Sickness*. He hath often granted the Desires of my Heart when ever it was for his Glory; and contradicted my wishes, and disapointed my Endeavors, in other Instances, when it was more to my Advantage. From how many Mischiefs hath he sav'd me, by such Things as I deprecated, and would have hinder'd? How many Evills hath he turn'd for Good? *He hath heard my Cry in the day Adversity, and set my feet in a large Place.* He hath Chasten'd me for my Profit: His Rod and his Staff have comforted me: He hath spoken comfortably to me in the Wilderness. Affliction hath been usefull and necessary Physick; made an Instrument of Vertue, and so a token of his Love. Therefore
I will

I will sing of the Mercy of the Lord for ever, and with the voice of Thanksgiving, will make known his Faithfullnes.

He hath all along conducted me by his Wisdom, guided me by his Providence, and *the Angel of his Presence* hath directed my Path, and ordered all my Goings. He hath been a Cloud to me by Day, and a Pillar of Fire by night: he hath helped me in my Straits, and suppli'd my wants, and comforted me in all my sadneses: His powerfull and gracious Presence hath been my constant Guard; and his Sovereign never-failing Goodness hath compassed me about with Mercy on every side. *For which, O most Mercifull Father, my Soul, and all that is within me, desires to speak thy Praise.*

The advantageous *Circumstances* of many divine Favors do raise their

Ps. 89. v. 1.

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value, and deserve to be particularly observ'd and acknowledged. How suitably, how seasonably, how wisely hath he confer'd his Benefits? with what Tenderness and Kindness? with what Freedom and Readiness? Of his own bounty and goodwill, without any Necessity, or Obligation on his Part; without any desert, and Sometimes without so much as a Prayer on mine. And what is more, notwithstanding my Ingratitude and Forgetfulness of Him, and great Provocations, heighned by the abuse of so much Mercy: demanding nothing after all, in requital of so much Kindness, but my Acceptance of his Love, and gratefull sense of his Goodness, and the sweetest and most reasonable Expressions of it, by Thankfull Obedience.

More *especially*, would I Bless the Lord, for Inlightening my mind in the Great Mysteries of Religion:
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disposing in wonderfull Wisdom the several means and methods, wherby he brought me to the *Knowledge of the Truth*, by Parents, Ministers, Friends, Acquaintance, Books, Afflictions, &c. Beginning with me in *Childhood*, awakening and cultivating the inbred notions of God, and natural Religion, of Good and Evil, Rewards and Punishments, by the carefull Instructions of Parents, or others concern'd in my Education: giving me the advantage of Good Examples, Counsels, and Encouragements, to know and do well; with more assistance, and less hindrances, and diversions, then to many Others. Particularly, for the Excellent Priviledge and inestimable Blessing of his *H. Word and Sacraments*; the liberty of the Christian Religion, in the Purity of it, in most of those Places, where God hath been pleas'd to cast my Lot. *Causing me to lay, down in green*

Pastures, and leading me beside the still Waters: Instructing me in the Revelation of his Will and Grace by *J. Christ*: acquainting me with the sublime Principles and Articles, Precepts and Rules, Promises and Hopes of the *Gospel*, in order to Eternal Life.

I blefs Thee, O Lord, and shall for ever do so, that with any or all these advantages and helps, thy H. Spirit, hath taught me *to know the Truth as it is in J. Jesus*, heartily to believe and obey it. That by thy Grace, I have been convinc'd of Sin, and brought to Repentance; shewing me the necessity of a Saviour, to make my Peace with Thee, the Allsufficiency of his Grace, the fullness of his merit, the freeness of his Love, and his readiness to receive me to mercy; inviting and calling me to it, and enabling me to accept his gracious Invitation, and obey his Compassionate Call: making

king me willing, by a *Powerfull and Victorious Grace*, drawing me with Cords of Love, and so effectually perswading me to consent to thy Covenant, and comply with thy message, on the gracious terms of the Gospel. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord J. Christ, who, thro his abundant mercy, hath begotten me againe to a lively Hope:* having humbled my proud Heart, and conquer'd the perversness of my Stubborn Will, and brought my Soul to an entire Subjection to himself. Who took pitty on me, when he saw me in my Bloud, spread his skirt over me, cast a mantle upon my nakedness, washed me from my Sins, and put his own Comeliness upon me, by sanctification: who open'd my Eyes when I was leaping blindfold into the pit of Destruction: who healed my Soul, when I was sick unto Death: who rescue'd and recover'd me from the slavery of the

Devil, when I was led Captive by him at his will. Shall not a ransom'd, redeemed Slave, be thankfull to his Deliverer? shall not a miserable undone Sinner, who is receiv'd to mercy, be thankfull for a Pardon? A wake *O my Soul!* and utter a song of Praise to Him, *who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, and healeth all thy Diseases, who redeemeth thy Life, (thy Soul,) from Destruction, and crowneth thee loving-kindness, and tender mercies.*

Hath he made thee partaker of his own renewed Image and likeness? given thee his Son, his Grace, his Spirit? and taken such a wretched Creature into so near a Relation to Himself, and promised to be thy God and Guide, thy Portion, and thine Inheritance, thy Friend, and thy Physitian, thy Sun, and thy shield, and thine exceeding great Reward? and shall not my Soul speak

Pf. 103. v. 2.

aloud

aloud his Praise? Hath he been mercifull to my unrighteousness, and blotted out my sins? hath he gathered me with his arm, and carried me in his bosome? hath he been my Saviour and Redeemer, adopted me into his Family, and promis'd to make me Blessed in his Glory, with the H. Angels? the Curse being removed, and the hand writing against me cancell'd, the Price paid, the breach made up, the mouth of Justice stopt, and the condemning Sentence of the Law exchang'd for a gracious pardon, thro the Sacrifice of my B. Lord *Jesus*? and shall I not praise his incomprehensible Love and Grace?

I likewise thank Thee, most Holy Father, for saving me from Guilt and Ruine, when assaulted by powerfull and dangerous Temptations: that by preventing mercy, or *Restraining Grace*, thou hast kept

Esa. 43. v. 14.

me

me from many Scandalous and presumptuous Crimes. I thank Thee, for making the Sins of Others, a warning and a Caution to me, an argument to humility, and a motive to watchfulness: for preserving my Judgment from many Errors and delusions, by which others are seduced: for enabling me to improve any opportunities of doing Good: and making me in any thing usefull to Others: yea I thank thee for all thy Mercies to other Christians; for all the Gifts and Graces and usefullness of any of thy Servants, wherein, as a member of the same Body, I desire to rejoyce: for any support and comfort to me, or Any of them, under honourable Sufferings for thy name sake.

I desire unfeignedly to bless Thee, for any Succor, relief and victory, with respect to the snares and buffetings of *Satan*, and the vilest of his *Temptations*. When he hath tempted
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ted me to Apostacy, and Infidelity in Speculation and practise; to question the Truth of the H. Scriptures, and the Life to come; to doubt of the foundations of the Christian Faith; or to despair of the mercy of God, and give up the Reins to sensual Lusts; or to draw me from God, by the love of the World, and the praise of men, by Evil Company, Intemperance, secret wickedness, &c.

I bless Thee with my whole Soul, for calling me back from any of my *Wanderings*, and by infinite Goodness recovering me after great Falls; enabling me to return, when I had gone astray, and seek thy forfeited Favor, that thou mayst *heal my Backslidings*: giving me, in order to it, a deep sense of my own Sin; and of thy Sovereign Grace; leading me to a Saviour, whose Blood cleanseth from all Sin, when my guilty, defiled Soul so much needed its pardon-

doning and cleansing vertue: awakening me to make holy *vows*, and calling upon me by thy word, and Spirit, and Providence to perform them.

I Bless Thee, who hast guided my feet into *the way of Peace*, when by the terrors of an accusing Conscience, and the sense of unpardon'd Sin, and the apprehensions of thy deserved wrath, I was ready to despair. That tho thou didst most justly hide thy Face at any time, it was but for a little while; but didst seasonably, and in mercy return, to wipe off my Tears, *restore the joy of thy salvation*, and chase away the clouds and darkness on my Spirit, by the reviving presence of thy own. Thou who art the *Author*, wilt be the *finisher of my Faith*: and therefore tho thou hast visited mine Iniquities with a Fatherly Rod, yet *thy Lovingkindness thou hast not taken from me*, or suffer'd *thy Faithfullness to fail*, or
thy

thy Covenant of Peace to be removed, but hast refreshed me with hidden Manna, after great Perplexities, saying unto my Soul, I am God, even thy God: making me to hear thy voice, which was sweet, and to taste thy Love, which is better then wine; enabling me to say with thine Apostle Thomas, My Lord, and My God. And to have any Communion with thee since, in publick or private Duties.

For all these innumerable Mercies, I desire to praise Thee, which yet are but in order to greater, to Everlasting Kindness in Heaven. These are but the taste, and earnest of what thou wilt bestow hereafter. O how great his his Goodness, that he hath laid up for Those that fear Him? And now Lord what wait I for? my Hope is even in Thee. I thank thee, who hast thus put it into my Heart, to render thee solemn Praise, and once more to renew my Covenant what thee.

I will

I will magnifie the Lord, and my Spirit shall rejoyce in God my Saviour. Return unto thy rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me. While (a) I live I will praise Thee, and sing praises to my God, while I have a being. O come and behold the works of the Lord, what he hath done for my Soul! the Lord liveth; (b) Blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my Salvation be exalted. Let my Heart be glad, and my Glory rejoyce, for the Lord is not asham'd to be called my God. Thanks be to God, who hath caused me to triumph in Christ Jesus. Sing unto the Lord, O ye his Saints! and give thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness. (c) I cryed unto thee, and thou hast healed, and sav'd me: I will give thanks to Thee for ever. (d) I will show forth thy Lovingkindness in the morning, and thy Faithfullness every Night

a Psal. 104. 33. b Psal. 18. 46. c Ps. 30.
d Psal 119. 62.

Night. For the Lord is Good, his mercy is Everlasting, and his Truth endures throout all Generations. O enter into his Gates with Thanksgiving, and his Courts with Praise: be thankfull unto him, and bless his name. Bless the Lord all ye his works in all places of his Dominion, Bless the Lord, O my Soul.

Let me add for a *Conclusion*; that the particular Deliverances, Supports, and Consolations, which at any time God hath given in cases of great Exigence, or in answer to importunate Prayer, ought never to be forgotten. Many experienc't Christians have been wont to write down such remarkable Appearances of God for them, with the particular Circumstances, that did recommend and enhance the mercy, (wither Spiritual or Temporal,) as an encouragement to trust in God, in future difficulties: and have afterwards found the Comfort and Ad-
yan-

vantage, of being able to have recourse to such Papers. This practice I recommend as what hath been usefull and Consolatory to diverse Christians, for many years afterward: and to some others, of their more intimate Friends, to whom they might without vanity be imparted. What experiences might be recorded of signal returns to Prayer, and seasonable manifestations of the Truth, and Goodness, and wisdom of God, if all the Instances thereof were duely recollected and preserv'd? And how sweet and pleasant would the work of Prayer and Praise then be? with what rejoycing and delight should we set about it, & live in it? if the constraining Goodness & Love of God, and a Thankfull sense of his unspeakable mercies did bring us to him, and indite and animate every word? what support and comfort, and probable hopes (at least) of the special Love of God might we derive

rive from the various passages of his Compassion and kindness? And hereby we may be able more heartily to give him thanks for Pardon, Sanctification, and Adoption, which we commonly mention with too much doubt and fear.

It may likewise be advisable to examine and record, the workings of your own Spirit, under such Dispensations. What Thoughts you then had of God? what acts of Faith, Love, Thankfullness you did then manifest? what Evidences of God's favor, and what discovery of your own Sincerity, you have had at such Times? when and how, and by what means you were cured of your uncomfortable unbelief, and raised from your despondency? what Promises you had recourse to for relief? what Considerations were most helpfull to you? what Frame of Spirit you kept up in Prayer, before and after? what Resolutions and Engagements
you

you made to God, to love, and trust, and praise, and serve him, and give up all to his dispose for the future? and what consequent obligation may be infer'd from thence, to acquiesce in the Will of God and resign our selves entirely to Him saying, *This God is our God for ever and ever, and He will be Our Guide unto Death.*



THE END.

